

## Supply

• (1710)

Our committee sat from the middle of December through until June 1992 when we filed a report with this House. That report was a unanimous report representing all of the parties in this House and the parties in the Senate. The committee had 21 members. That is a lot of members on a committee and that is a lot of members from whom to get a unanimous report. We recommended that we amend the Parliament of Canada Act by creating the concept of a juriconsult. I want to quote from an article about the juriconsult written by Barbara Kagedan, who was our chief researcher on the committee. It is from the *Canadian Parliamentary Review* winter 1992-93 issue, Volume 15, No. 4 on page 21. It says:

Once a member has made the required disclosure to the juriconsult, has taken any further steps recommended by the juriconsult to ensure that the obligations under the act can be fulfilled, and filed the public disclosure statement, then the juriconsult will provide a written certificate to the member, confirming that the disclosure obligations have been satisfied. If subsequently an issue is raised whether a particular asset or interest was properly disposed of, or appropriately placed in a trust, and those steps were taken at the direction of and in accordance with recommendations by the juriconsult, then the member can rely on the certificate to demonstrate his or her compliance with the act.

The second advisory role of the juriconsult is to assist members as issues of possible conflicts of interest arise during their term in Parliament, or their tenure as minister or parliamentary secretary.

I am going to stop there for a moment. The concept is that when a member is elected he will make a disclosure of all his assets and all the assets his wife has if he knows what she has. Obviously there is no way we can insist that because a person marries someone we can force a disclosure. If they are not married we cannot force a disclosure, that is impossible to do. The member's disclosure is of all the assets he owns and all the assets he knows his wife owns.

The disclosure is of two kinds. There are personal assets, like a house, a cottage and so on, and there are business assets which are listed in detail. If it comes to shares in a company it may be a significant interest or an insignificant interest. It is a question of disclosure, and that disclosure is made public.

Once the disclosure of probable conflicts is made the juriconsult can give members a letter saying that as long

as they behave themselves in this fashion anything they do is fine. We are not going to be insisting, as is presently in the current rules for parliamentary secretaries and ministers, that they report to Georges Tsai, the Deputy Registrar General. Mr. Tsai is a good fellow, but he has a lot of specific rules. Anybody who is appointed to cabinet or to be a parliamentary secretary has to fill in this great application. I looked at it and said: "Oh my gosh, could I ever fill that in? I do not know". I had Georges Tsai do an application for me in blank and it was interesting. All my private business activities were apparently okay because I was not a director.

I go to director meetings by invitation and I make decisions. I may help make the decisions but I was a shareholder so that was okay. I have 200 shares in the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. By George, I have to sell those. Do you know something? I even belong to a golf club and they give me my membership free. "You cannot do that," says Georges Tsai. Why not?

These silly regulations in the current rules that cabinet ministers and parliamentary secretaries must comply with are crazy. They make no public sense. The new juriconsult proceeding will enable members to make a declaration to the juriconsult and he can determine if there is really a conflict of interest.

If I belong to the Mississauga Golf and Country Club because my neighbours would like me to belong to that club—I do not play golf anyway, I just eat occasionally—then surely there is no conflict of interest in my membership in that club with my duty as a parliamentarian. It would not matter if I was a minister either. It does not affect the Government of Canada.

Conflicts of interest or possible ownership or possible membership does not affect the way you operate in an honest, straightforward way as a member and it should not be a matter of disclosure, disclaimer or divestment. That is the general tenor of this whole report.

The government has said that it approves the report. The minister said today that it is in the final stages of drafting and he hopes to be able to introduce new legislation on this issue almost immediately. People will sit back and ask: "Why was it not done earlier? After all you received the report in June". Members must appre-