

*Supply*

Finally, I feel it is important to mention in this House that since 1984 our government has endeavoured to establish a clear and high standard of ethics and to make sure hon. members, especially those with special functions, abide by them. We have introduced Bill C-43, created a joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons, worked hard and tabled a report, and now we hope to be able, in the coming months, to pass conflict of interest legislation which will raise the level of debate in this House so that the intentions of any parliamentarian making allegations are crystal clear.

This afternoon several allegations were made. I think that a shame because most of the people referred to were not here to defend themselves. Of course, in most cases, with very few exceptions, no proceedings or actions were taken. As far as conflicts of interest are concerned, I would say that two people were directly affected by the Conflict of Interests Act. A lot of names were mentioned by both opposition parties and some of us. If we want to enhance the quality of parliamentary proceedings, we must, first and foremost, make a distinction between criminal activities and conflicts of interest. Thanks to the Prime Minister, we have worked hard to improve parliamentary proceedings and project a better image to the Canadian public.

**Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Madam Speaker, I think the last 20 minutes during which the hon. member for Champlain spoke were certainly the best 20 minutes in this debate. From listening to him closely, I must say that I found it refreshing to hear the comments of the member who has been in this House since 1984 and been a parliamentary secretary for several years now. He is recognized as a member who does his job very well and honestly. He is at work regularly and defends the interests not only of his constituents but also of all Canadians.

As I was listening to the member for Champlain, I had the opportunity to refer to a document that I have here, written some time ago by Barbara Kagedan who did some research and published this document on public duties and private interests which can of course give rise to comments on conflict of interest.

Earlier in the day, opposition members tried to show that our government has done nothing in the area of conflict of interest and ethics, nothing to implement measures that would put members above all suspicion. On reading this document I realized that the Liberal Party's record when it was in government was not very enviable. The first reference in the document I have in my hand is to July 1973.

At that time the Hon. Allan MacEachen, then President of Treasury Board, tabled a green paper entitled "Members of Parliament and Conflict of Interest". This document was studied in a committee of the House of Commons and in a Senate committee but was never debated in the House. It was only studied in committee. In 1978 legislation was tabled but it died on the Order Paper.

• (1940)

In 1983, five years later, then Prime Minister Trudeau set up a task force that studied the subject, but again nothing came of it. Only in 1985 did we see some action, which was initiated by the Prime Minister of Canada.

Therefore I find it rather far-fetched to say that our government has done nothing. Our record should be compared with that of the party that preceded us.

I would now like to ask my colleague from Champlain a question. For the benefit of the House and the public record, since he has been a parliamentary secretary for some time already, could he briefly state the rules that he must obey from the time he is sworn in as a parliamentary secretary?

**Mr. Champagne (Champlain):** Madam Speaker, I will provide a very brief answer to my colleague by saying that those nine rules which must be followed by parliamentary secretaries and ministers are very strict.

I also want to remind the hon. member and my colleagues—I will not read all those rules again because it would take too much time in this House—that the second of those rules states that he has "an obligation to act in a manner that will bear the closest public scrutiny, an obligation that is not fully discharged by simply acting within the law".

I believe that says it all and in our mind, at least in mine, as soon as we have a law which provides more, we will be able to tell ourselves, as politicians and government members, that we have kept our promise and that the Prime Minister, through his bill—because Bill C-43