

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

GOVERNMENT POSITION ON CONTRIBUTIONS TO ELECTION EXPENSES OF MINISTERS FROM COMPANIES WHOSE OPERATIONS ARE WITHIN THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Having sat here for two or three days and listened to what has been going on, it has become abundantly clear to me that the political morality of this government is about as deep as a dishpan full of dirty water. In view of the statement made by the Minister of Labour in this House and the statement of the Minister of National Health and Welfare broadcast by the CBC today, may I ask the Acting Prime Minister if the government has any policy with respect to cabinet ministers receiving political donations during campaigns? I mean, for example, situations in which the Minister of National Health and Welfare would receive a donation from pharmaceutical companies, or the Minister of Supply and Services would receive contributions from suppliers under contract to the federal government.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that the morality required of cabinet ministers is any greater than the morality required of members of this House as a whole. I think we all share the same responsibilities. We must act with integrity and refuse to be bought and never be under the influence of money or anything else. I attribute no such motives to my hon. friend. I hope he does not attribute them to any of the rest of us.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at the minister's perception of political morality and his view on political science, which is that the duties and responsibilities of a minister of the Crown are the same as those of an ordinary member of the House of Commons. Would the minister answer my question? Does the cabinet have any policy on the receipt of political contributions by ministers of the Crown who have taken oaths of office to administer departments of the Crown during an election campaign.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, the answer is that the same standards apply to all members of parliament, as well as to candidates for this House as apply to us. After all, the hon. gentleman seemed to assume, in the last election campaign, that we would continue to be the government.

Mr. Nowlan: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My point is simple, I hope not too simple for the narrow confines of the gray matter of the Acting Prime Minister. Under the constitution of this country, as the Acting Prime Minister knows, the government continues and ministers of the Crown continue in their offices even when the House of Commons is dissolved, until a new government is sworn in. If the Acting Prime Minister does not know that elementary fact of political science, it is no wonder that we see this most improvident government, which has been established since the last election campaign.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to clarify something right away, as a result of information I have received. I believe that the hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo referred to certain

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remarks which appeared in the *Toronto Sun*, which referred to Gordon McCaffrey. I should like to clear this up immediately. Mr. McCaffrey is not my executive assistant. He is my special assistant. To be precise about what he said to the *Sun*, he copied down his statement. This is a direct quote: "I said to the *Sun*, the minister asked for an investigation into the allegations by Morton Shulman, but the minister is not in a position to tell the RCMP whom they should investigate."

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Athabasca.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SEAFARERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION—ASSURANCE DECISION ON HOLDING INDEPENDENT INQUIRY NOT BIASED

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is addressed to the Acting Prime Minister and relates to the subject matter raised by the hon. member for Calgary North. As there is some question of impropriety involved in the investigation which the RCMP is carrying out, and as it appears that the only people who will decide whether there is evidence of impropriety to warrant a public inquiry will be the ministers themselves, will the Acting Prime Minister tell the House what steps he intends to take to convince Canadians, or at least make it appear, that an impartial decision, without bias, will be made on the basis of evidence presented by the RCMP on whether or not an inquiry should be held.

● (1150)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. With all due respect, several times that very same question or one slightly different has been put. It seems it has been answered every time it has been put. There is a rule which states that the same question cannot be put more than once in the same question period.

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FINANCE

ALLEGED ANNOUNCEMENT ALBERTA WILL REDUCE REVENUES FROM OIL—CONSULTATION WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. J.-J. Blais (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. I hope it will be an interlude in these particular deliberations. It arises out of an announcement made yesterday by the premier of Alberta in which he indicated that within two weeks measures will be announced whereby the provincial take from oil revenues will be reduced. Prior to making that announcement, did the premier of Alberta consult with the federal government?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, not with me.