

Supply

was before Cabinet and, therefore, should have had the right to speak out. He did not have the right to speak out. He took an oath of office and broke it.

Ms. Copps: What about Mr. Woods?

Mr. Shields: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member had her full 20 minutes. Would she please allow me mine? I know she does not feel too much courtesy toward this institution, but I would ask her to try just once.

The Minister stated in this House that a number of letters are received by his Department addressed to him which are forwarded to the appropriate segment of the Department of Transport. There are letters of complaint and letters of commendation received. The Hon. Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) stood in this House and stated that all letters of complaint or commendation with regard to Air Canada are automatically channelled to Air Canada. I do not expect the Member for Hamilton East to respect the word of the Minister because her lack of respect for this institution is well known. I do resent, however, her very clear attempt to smear that most Hon. Member of the House of Commons.

I would now like to turn to the remarks of the Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans). He asked all Members of the House to pay attention to the points which he was trying to make. He mentioned the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. He said that all these things guarantee the right to speak out. I ask that Member and the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) how they know what took place on that airplane. How does the Hon. Member know what took place in a closed meeting between the company, the employee and the union? I do not know. I know they do not know.

● (1630)

I was in this House when the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) stood in his place and apologized to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski). He said that in no way was he trying to impugn the reputation of the Minister. Yet he stood in this House today and moved this motion and during his speech he attempted to smear the reputation of the Minister by implying, and he may not have meant it but this is the way I interpreted it—

Ms. Copps: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I believe this is the second time the Hon. Member has referred to the smearing of reputations. If he will consult Erskine May, being a Member of long standing, he will realize that he is imputing motives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The point of order raised is a point of order, no question. However, I see nothing unparliamentary in the last comments of the Hon. Member for Athabasca (Mr. Shields).

Mr. Shields: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Hon. Member stood in his place and apologized profusely to the Minister of

Transport. He said, in effect, "Gee, Mr. Minister, I would not want you to think for a moment that I was implying anything about you or your reputation or the way you handle the Department of Transport." Yet he gets up in this House today and does exactly that, in my view. Then, of course, the old coalition goes to work. The famous member of the Rat Pack, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East, stands in her place and goes right along her merry old way of smearing, smearing, smearing, and I resent that.

The Minister stated clearly in this House that he does not even see letters of complaint which come to his office; they go directly to the company, as do letters of commendation. The Hon. Member for Hamilton East and the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain know that. Every Member in this House knows that the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney), or the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) do not have the time to sit down and read pitiful letters of complaint, although they may be legitimate. They are sent to the companies concerned.

Air Canada did not unilaterally suspend this individual. Air Canada, as an independent Crown corporation, called a hearing where everyone concerned was in attendance. How do the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain and the Hon. Member for Hamilton East know how this individual treated her passengers? I do not know, I was not there. However, clearly something more than just a joking comment, as the Hon. Member for Hamilton East put it, about the Minister of Transport must have taken place.

I firmly believe that Air Canada is a responsible company. It has a responsible relationship with all of its unions. They do not want to have on their hands a grievance which they are going to lose, so they must have had clear reasons for suspending this individual. I do not know if she was pleasant or if she was joking. None of us do.

That brings me to the question I have been leading to. I think this is probably the silliest waste of the time of this House of Commons that I have ever seen in the six years I have been here. I think it is hypocritical in a sense that the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain and his partner, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East, are using this claptrap for political purposes. That is all they are using it for. I sat in opposition. I know how important it is to bring to this House of Commons important questions facing the country. What about the 8,000 people in Alberta who have lost their jobs since February?

Mr. Angus: Whose fault is that?

Mr. Shields: Now he is going to make some noise. The Hon. Member had a whole day during which he could have talked about the economy of western Canada. He could have said that with oil prices the way they are we have lost 8,000 jobs in Alberta since February. He could have pointed out that the forecast of job loss this year in Alberta alone looked to be 50,000.