

*Government Orders*

That seems to me a fairly straightforward and clear statement of intent.

Independence means not connected to the party in government or the party in opposition. I realize there are many times when the third party does not really behave like a political party. If a party has not been in existence very long and does not have much history, it really does not understand how political parties behave. However, according to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, it is a political party. It may be tragic. It may be unfortunate but it is a political party. It appears to be a political party with more than its share of empty barrels. As a political party it is not considered independent.

• (1155)

The hon. member for Calgary suggested her party could do this independently. It may well be its neophyte status in Parliament that under the rules of Parliament, even being the third party, it does not qualify as independent. There are other adjectives such as strategic, legal, et cetera, which it may not qualify for as well. I would not comment on those, heaven forbid.

I remind members of the third party as well as my trusting and beloved colleagues on this side of the House that keeping red book promises is very important.

**Mr. Stinson:** It is called patronage with a capital P.

**Ms. Clancy:** A three syllable word, well done. When I sat on the other side of the House and saw the law reform commission disbanded, I along with many of my colleagues was very unhappy. I knew how important it was to the development of legislation.

One of the things the law commission does is provide a critical eye and a distinctive perspective on modernizing the law. The word modernizing is very important. Words like modernize, progressive and forward looking along with independent and strategic may not be words familiar to some of our colleagues.

The commission will have five guiding principles. It will approach the law from a multi-disciplinary perspective, and this is very important. As I said before, one cannot leave the making of the law and the creativity of law reform merely to lawyers or legislators. One needs to bring in people from all walks of life, to listen to them, to hear what they need.

When I taught law I used to tell my students the law is a reactive social science. In general law will come into existence to react to a specific need, to specific a situation.

Sometimes, as in the case of human rights law, the law is proactive. For many of us, especially those enamoured of human rights law and who see this as one of the brightest lights in our parliamentary careers, the law then becomes proactive.

In general it is reactive and it is the job of a law commission to delve into the hearts and minds of the people in a way that legislators and lawyers in the legislatures do not have the time to do. They have a specific job which they will be doing all the time whereas legislators, contrary to the rather superficial responses of the third party, have other things to do.

We as legislators and as members of Parliament have case-work, committee work, political work, travelling back and forth to our ridings. It is a massive job, which I do not have to tell anyone here, including members of the third party.

Consequently if one is to serve the people as one should with the law reform commission one needs people who will dedicate all their time to the particular necessities and exigencies of law reform.

This seems a fairly simple statement and a fairly simple concept to grasp. Obviously it is not in some cases, but I can do only what I have been asked by the people controlling the debate. The chips will have to fall where they may, in empty barrels or elsewhere.

There are five guiding principles. I have talked about the first one, a multi-disciplinary perspective being open and inclusive by making its work more accessible and understandable to all Canadians. This is something that is very dear to my heart.

• (1200)

I taught undergraduates in several universities in Nova Scotia in areas of law, family law, legal status of women, law and aging, and environmental law. I always found it terribly important to demystify the legal process for the majority of Canadians.

A legitimate complaint that comes to us both as legislators and lawyers is that the law is mumbo-jumbo. There are legal documents and pieces of legislation that the average Canadian does not understand what we are on about. Part of the work of the law reform commission is to make the law more accessible and understandable for Canadians and to utilize innovative research, consultation and management practices through new technologies.

As we approach the millennium we have exploding technology in the country. We are one of the leading countries on earth, if not the leading in certain high tech areas. Except for the people trained in those particular disciplines, to the vast majority of Canadians a lot of this is very mystifying.

How much more mystifying is the regulatory and legislative process that surrounds us? Ergo, how much more necessary is it to have the law reform commission take on the job of making sure that as the legislation is brought forward to the government it will be less mystifying to Canadians?