

Privilege—Mr. Lawrence

promoting their emancipation and growth. In other words we are not here to play hide-and-seek to protect anybody.

Whether it be police forces, high-ranking civil servants or government authorities that are involved and made mistakes, we and the people are entitled to know the truth. And we should agree that the matter be referred to committee, so we may shed light. Certainly there can be no other conclusion that those who do not support that have something to hide. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, everything surrounding the facts that came to light, everything surrounding the very existence of the McDonald inquiry, the circumstances surrounding what is for all practical purposes the demise of the Keable inquiry in Quebec, all these things are rather mysterious and directions have certainly been given at a certain time to create such a situation. If we are not given the opportunity to scrutinize those issues in committee, how shall we know? When shall we be able to undertake a really objective analysis of all those facts and circumstances?

Mr. Speaker, we have no choice because there is no other means in this country to call all the witnesses to throw light on that issue. We have witnessed the fight between the Solicitor General of the federal government and the attorney general of Quebec concerning the famous Keable inquiry. We have witnessed that mouse and cat game, those proposals and counter-proposals, the systematic refusal of any cooperations to shed light on the activities of police agencies and authorities in that matter, Mr. Speaker. How would we not conclude, as are doing all Canadians, that there is a plot of enormous proportions to try hiding the truth?

This is why, now that we have an opportunity to find out the truth, not for the sake of political or partisan revenge but merely to demonstrate to Canadians that we are responsible, we want to show our respect for democracy and even if the inquiry casts aspersion on certain people, we agree to go to the bottom of the matter to purify political morals and put an end to irregularities by the police to make sure that that kind of interference with the basic rights of citizens will not reoccur.

[English]

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have an opportunity to speak in this debate because I think it is a matter of great importance. At least, I would have thought it was a matter of great importance, because surely whether the parliamentary system works or does not work depends on whether we can trust one another; and if we are getting into situations where a member cannot trust a minister, an answer he gets from a minister, a letter he gets from a minister, or a verbal answer he gets from a minister outside this House, and if he cannot trust that he is getting accurate information from a minister, or from another member for that matter, then how can this parliamentary system work at all? That is what I think is really at stake here.

When this letter was written on December 4, 1973, by the solicitor general of the time, we do not know whether the solicitor general of the time knew he was giving false informa-

[Mr. Matte.]

tion to the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence). We do know that, in response to a letter of November 21 addressed to that minister by a member of this House, that minister gave incorrect information when he stated that he had been assured by the RCMP that it was not its practice to intercept the private mail of anyone, when it was its practice, when it was the usual thing, and when the RCMP had done it on dozens and hundreds of occasions.

Whether the minister just did not know or whether he took any steps to check the information he got, this House does not know. Therefore Mr. Speaker found a prima facie case. I want to point out what Mr. Speaker said as it is recorded at page 1857 of *Hansard* as follows:

I, therefore, find a prima facie case of contempt against the House of Commons.

Further on Mr. Speaker said:

—the hon. member does in fact have a prima facie case of privilege involving a deliberate attempt to impede the House in its work, and perhaps the minister and, in turn, the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham.

Having found a prima facie case, Mr. Speaker was not making a final decision. Surely the House has no other recourse but to ask the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections to look into this matter. That is what one would have thought, but for the second time since 1965 hon. gentlemen opposite are going to vote against such a motion.

I remember that there was an Irish playwright who wrote a play called "The Playboy of the Western World". We see on the benches opposite the lemmings of the western world. They are all rushing headlong after their leader going over the precipice to electoral suicide. They are absolute lemmings, going blindly. The hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne) demonstrated his lemming-like instincts here today. I have made up a little verse about him.

The member for Miramichi

When told by his whip says "oui, oui".

Tonight on orders you'll note

He'll give us a negative vote.

That is a typical hon. gentleman opposite. He does not want to make up his own mind about contempt of parliament, about contempt of the privileges of members, about whether members should get truthful answers from ministers, about whether members should get truthful answers from members or about whether members should have any rights at all. He just wants to vote blindly with his whip. When the whip says "vote yes," he votes "oui, oui."

The member for Miramichi

When told by his whip say "oui, oui".

Tonight on orders you'll note

He'll give us a negative vote.

I hope the hon. member proves me wrong before the night is out, or tomorrow is out, or Monday is out, or Tuesday is out, or Wednesday is out. Because if I had my way, we would debate this for the next month. We would give up Christmas.

Mr. Nystrom: Three cheers for Tom Mayo.