

*Morality in Government*

that something of this sort is going on, because people have given me information and I do not know where else they could have got it but from the confidential files of the immigration department. I had no complaint to make in that case because nothing further came of the matter, and there was nothing discreditable in my conduct. But the atmosphere was discreditable, Mr. Speaker. The atmosphere of "We can find out something about you and maybe this will silence you, maybe you will not be so critical," was discreditable.

I say that members of this house should be free to criticize without fear that some matter affecting their personal reputation, other than a proper accusation of crime or misconduct, will be brought up. Matters of a scandalous nature ought not to be made available to any member of this house on the government side or elsewhere.

We feel strongly about this matter, Mr. Speaker. We do not want to take part in this debate in any tone of partisan bitterness. For myself I hope that the Prime Minister will come forward and give an explanation satisfactory to the house. I asked a question in the house last Friday. I did not do so in order to make a score off the party to which I happen to be opposed. I asked the question because I wanted some sort of explanation made to the house as to something which it seems to me strikes at the freedom and fundamental dignity of the members of this house.

It is for this reason, Mr. Speaker, that I for one and other members of this party will support this amendment.

**Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to support the amendment put forward by the hon. member for Royal (Mr. Fairweather). I can assure you, sir, that I am going to deal with the principle that has been raised in the amendment, namely, the violation of the rights and privileges of private members in this house. I shall tie that in to the tactics that have been referred to whereby the R.C.M.P. has been used to investigate the background and past activities of hon. members for the sake of personal persecution, blackmail or for whatever the purpose might be.

I think the hon. member for Royal has established the debate on a high level in dealing with the obvious difficulty that we are confronted with in this parliament. The destruction of parliament's prestige and the

[Mr. Brewin.]

criticism of the parliamentary process in the press and other news media of the nation are closely connected with the events that have been referred to by the hon. member for Royal and the hon. member who has just resumed his seat.

I am going to try to bring some concrete information before the house which I think will pinpoint in specific terms the need for raising this question as a matter of confidence at the present time. Many hon. members have been disturbed by current trends. A few have become personally involved, and I have been one of those. I think, Mr. Speaker, that as I refer to the incidents in my own particular case it will be agreed and it will be concluded by my colleagues in this house, particularly the private members, that at the present time we have a reasonable grievance.

Two years ago in December, 1964, I had occasion to take part in a C.B.C. radio broadcast. At that time I dealt with a subject that was exercising the minds of a good many members of the house as well as of citizens across the country. I dealt with the subject of morality in politics. This, incidentally, has been described by the hon. member for Royal as the principle that he is trying to get at in his amendment this afternoon.

I thought that I dealt in reasonable and moderate terms with the subject of morality in politics, which I think all hon. members will agree was topical then and is still topical at the present time. However, notwithstanding the reasonableness of my approach on December 14—the broadcast took place on December 11, 1964—I received a letter from the Prime Minister very bitterly upbraiding me for the manner in which I had downgraded the parliament of Canada.

● (5:30 p.m.)

Although this letter has been tabled in the house, no reference has been made to it in detail, and perhaps if I were to read it at this time it would indicate the tone to which I refer.

Dear Mr. Dinsdale:

I have been trying—without success—to secure from your office a copy of your Nation's Business broadcast of December 11th. However, I have received a transcript from the C.B.C. which confirms that you said this:

"Today, too, we find the nation rocked by evidence of lack of integrity in high places in government."

This is a serious charge to be made against men in high places in government. It becomes the more serious when made by a Privy Councillor.