

Morality in Government

met with leading figures on both sides and tried to use my good offices to bring some kind of end to their impossible tug-of-war, because they were asking that the matter be decided by a vote of the members, and no one would give in. When the hearing was completed, the ministers of the crown were cleared.

It is true that the head of the government insurance office left his job. But my point is this, and I make it to the N.D.P.: During that time when the premier of Saskatchewan, along with his ministers, was under heavy personal attack, charged with allegations in many ways much more terrible than this house has had to endure, the Conservative party in Saskatchewan stood for the rights of all people in that province to see that their legislature was preserved and that the rights of individuals were not condemned.

During that awful period the rumours that went around our province and through the legislative building every hour on the hour were just as bad as we have had to endure in the last few years here in Ottawa. I mention this to the New Democratic Party on the ground that now I think they can measure up to their democratic responsibility by indicating in this house that they disapprove, not only of this type of blanket charge that we have had to endure, but of the concept that the mounted police of our country, which has the highest reputation of any police force in the world, should be forced into a position where they have to degrade themselves to become watchdogs over members of parliament for a period of 10 years.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question. I wonder whether he is aware of the fact that the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) stated this afternoon that this is the position of our party and that we shall be voting for the amendment.

• (9:20 p.m.)

Mr. Hamilton: I am very glad to hear this interjection because I wanted to make this appeal and I wanted to make it absolutely clear, with no sense of malice to the N.D.P. whatsoever, that we can all be subjected to this type of treatment.

I recall what the premier of Saskatchewan had to go through in my province on this same type of attack, not only the type of allegations but this rumour-mongering. I believe it would have been easy for me to have joined in this business of worrying the premier when he seemed to be flat on his back.

However, I took the course—and many people in my party in the province of Saskatchewan accused me of destroying the chance for my party to rise in power—of trying to defend a principle which I still believe in. I am glad to hear that the N.D.P. are going to stand with us on this matter, because it is crucial.

When a government is attacked as the opposition must attack a government, it is not a proper course of action to use the national police of the country to destroy the reputation of any individual in this house, whether requested by a prime minister or not. I believe this country knows that we can only carry on as a parliament when certain codes of ethics are followed. This is illustrated in the fact that we assume every person in this house is a gentleman and we must take his word, even though that is hard at times.

Second, we have certain rules developed over the centuries to try to protect the rights of individuals in this house. If my history is not wrong, that mace sitting on the table when Mr. Speaker is in the chair, is a symbol that no one, neither a monarch sitting up in the gallery nor any agent of a monarch, has any right to impose pressure on members; it makes no difference whether the Queen's first minister uses that technique. This is what the issue is here today, Mr. Speaker—and my time goes on.

I should like, if I may, to read an article which appeared on March 8 in many papers across Canada. It is written by a gentleman named Douglas Fisher who was in this house. This article disturbed me at the time and I have questioned this ex-N.D.P. member closely about the article. The article has been challenged but no action has been taken on this challenge. I ask all members who are not committed to a fixed course of action to read what one of our ex-members said. Before going into that article, I have been rereading what was quoted by the member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) about what the member for Port Arthur said on March 4, 1965 when he asked the speaker for a ruling on this question of private members, on the government side, posing questions which indicated extremely clearly that they had access to documents only available to ministers. I could duplicate, for example, the question which he used with other samples, because I noticed, as an ex-minister, certain questions going on the order paper which could only come from the files of ministers. At this time the member for Port Arthur asked the