

*Government Orders*

I listened, more in sorrow than in anger, to members opposite talk about Liberal flunkeys. I think of the people who have served on law reform commissions. Those comments ill serve anybody who wishes to be a public servant. In particular, I think of members of the former law reform commission, Mr. Justice Linden, for example. I recall Mr. Justice Linden's coming to a parliamentary committee where he and I crossed swords in an admirable debate on a bill which his commission had brought forward.

Mr. Justice Linden was then of the Ontario high court, as it was known. He is now with the appeal division of the Federal Court of Canada. He is the author of a torts textbook which all of us in the House who went through law school had the pleasure to read. We were taught very well by Mr. Justice Linden through his publications, textbooks and articles. To refer to him as a Liberal flunkey does a great disservice to the bench, the bar and Canadians who serve their country.

In my province of Nova Scotia one of the many lawyers and lay persons who have served so well on law reform commissions is the former dean of Dalhousie Law School, Professor William Charles. He was known across Canada as a law teacher. He was one of the founders of the University of Victoria law school when the University of Victoria asked Dalhousie law school to send professors to help it start a law school. He is unparalleled in his respect across the country in legal circles as someone learned in the law, a law reformer, a law teacher and a legal administrator.

I think of the current president of the University of Calgary, Murray Fraser, another former acting dean and associate dean at Dalhousie Law School. He was the first dean of the University of Victoria law school. He served on the Law Reform Commission of Canada back in the middle seventies before he went on to Victoria.

In Nova Scotia, where politics are taken with pabulum, the Fraser family would be taken aback to hear President Fraser referred to as a Liberal flunkey or a flunkey of any kind. That kind of pejorative talk is unfortunate.

It is perhaps because certain political parties are new to the legislative process that it behoves those of us who have been around a little longer to talk about—

**Mr. Stinson:** Far too long.

**Ms. Clancy:** Not according to the people of Nova Scotia.

The people on the Law Reform Commission of Canada and the various provincial law commissions have a job quite different from that of legislators. I have served for seven years in the House. Mr. Speaker, you and I served together on a legislative committee, which I am sure will go down in your memory, when we were in opposition.

Legislative committees are one of the areas along with the Chamber where parliamentarians from both sides of the House can make their wishes, their policy concerns and their concerns generally for the development of legislation heard. That is what we are here for, no question.

• (1150)

A law commission is instituted for those areas that parliamentarians, busy with their daily jobs, do not have time to delve into. The vast majority of members are not lawyers, which is a good thing. The vast majority of members are certainly not academics and, heaven knows, the vast majority of members are not what one could call intellectuals. Consequently we are not in the business of doing the kind of legal research, exploration and prognostication—look it up—that leads to legislation in good government and prods governments to move in ways in the best interests of the country.

That is why people of the calibre of Mr. Justice Linden, Professor William Charles and President Murray Fraser have served at the provincial and federal levels along with hundreds of other Canadians. They have served with one desire and one desire only, to do good for their country.

For members of the opposition to use this bill, which fulfils a red book promise, as some sort of partisan stick with which they think they are beating the government not only cheapens the process when we consider the source but it says to Canadians we do not want their participation in the public process.

We on this side of the House do not say that. Three million dollars for this law commission is a low price to pay for the tremendous contribution of the people who will serve on this commission. What a low price to pay for the tremendous work they will do, for the hours of research, for the incredible gift of their thoughts, hard work and dedication to Canada.

It reminds me of a bit of a cliché about optimists and pessimists, certainly something that has been repeated often; the idea that an optimist sees a glass half full and a pessimist sees a glass half empty. When it comes to the boards and commissions that help us run the country, that advise the government, prod the government, in many cases boards and commissions at arm's length from the government with quasi-judicial functions on behalf of the people of Canada, the glass from my point of view is more than merely half full, it is full.

How very lucky we are in Canada that there are legions of citizens delighted to fulfil this role when many of them could be making more money and certainly taking a whole lot less abuse in other endeavours.

Having dealt summarily with the unusual and perhaps ill-informed comments from the other side, I will talk a bit about the bill. What is the commission created for? It is to fulfil the needs of the government and Parliament for independent, broadly based, strategic advice on legal policy and law reform issues.