

*Statements by Ministers*

the opportunity to make use of that information, gathered as a result of the cabinet process, to improve their own personal lot in life. Of course, one hopes that this opportunity is never used. Members of Parliament only become knowledgeable of cabinet decisions when they are made public and, therefore, have no greater opportunity than any other citizen of this country to achieve any personal gain from a decision made by Cabinet. Therefore, I think those two bodies must be viewed separately.

I say quite bluntly that I support the Government's move to strengthen a code of ethics for cabinet Ministers and require higher standards than heretofore might have been in place. It does not necessarily flow from that, however, that changes are absolutely necessary for the ordinary Members who serve on the back-benches in Parliament. I repeat that I feel a sense of concern rather than concrete knowledge that the measures being proposed are wrong.

The questions that come to mind about this proposal are not specific. However, one of the proposed draft orders states that the Clerk shall maintain a public registry of foreign travel by Members of Parliament in which Members shall register all trips that they make outside of Canada arising from or relating to their membership in the House of Commons where the cost of any such travel is not wholly borne by certain groups.

If a Member were to be invited to address a university in Detroit, for example, and the passage was to be provided by that university for the purpose of making a representation at a seminar, is that to be listed? If so, why? What would be the reason for doing that? If a Member were provided with return tickets from Ottawa to Washington, Baltimore or New York to speak to a board of trade about matters relating to the policy of that Member's political Party with regard to public policy, is such a trip to be reported and, if so, why? What purpose would it serve to list those visits?

I believe we are trying to address an issue that is quite different. I think it is time we recognized that we are talking about Members who take trips at the expense of groups, individuals and Governments to exotic places in the world for well-paid holidays.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** What is exotic?

**Mr. Deans:** Exotic is any place where one has not been. That seems to be the definition for exotic.

I do not doubt that there may be some reason to consider seriously listing visits like that because the public may have the right to know who is paying for it and, therefore, why certain representations are being made in the House of Commons on a particular subject which bears a direct relationship between the Member making the representation and the group being represented. Perhaps there should be a way to check up on trips like that.

However, with respect to other trips, such as the examples I have given, I wonder if it makes much sense for the Clerk, busy as he is at all times, to be required to be in the office each day while Members troop in and fill out the registry and then to have it verified as being correct. Furthermore, what will we

do if a Member did not indicate where he or she went? Do we issue a statement to the effect that the Member is in breach of the guidelines? But being in breach of the guidelines does not matter very much since there are no penalties.

Therefore, I say to the Government House Leader that these are matters that came to my attention when I heard what he said and read what was contained in the proposed orders. I am curious to know what useful purpose can be served.

Incidentally, I have no objection to listing everything I do, but what purpose does it serve to list the various remunerated trades, professions or vocations or Members? The people who will make the judgment about whether the Member is doing his or her job properly will be the electors. They will judge whether the Member was present frequently enough to perform his or her duties. Therefore, is it necessary for an ordinary Member, who has very little influence within the House of Commons, as it now stands, to list the remunerated trades, professions or vocations which he or she may have or to name the clients when the interest in those areas includes personal services by the Members?

I think it would be better to suggest that a Member cannot act on behalf of anyone for remuneration when the matter that is to be acted upon is one that falls within the ambit of the responsibility of a Member of Parliament. Frankly, I believe a rule already exists that no Member should be able to do for money that which he or she is being paid to do for the House of Commons, for their constituents and for the public of Canada. I would say that the law now covers that and that it does not have to be contained within these guidelines. Nevertheless, let us look at it anyway.

● (1530)

I do not propose to go on any longer. I think you understand, Mr. Speaker, that I am in a general way supportive of having some way to deal with what we have identified as a problem. I am concerned, though not yet focused on my concerns, about this kind of approach. I would certainly welcome hearing the views of other Hon. Members; not only those of my own colleagues, but the views of other Hon. Members in the House of Commons. I invite—although I do not often do this and it may be a little unusual—other Members who have views to express on this to do so, if they would not mind, since it is a totally non-partisan matter. In order to help me in my deliberations, I invite them to feel comfortable in letting me know how they feel about it and how they see it affecting their lives or the way they are able to do their work. In the final analysis, the argument which will take place on whether this will become law or otherwise, within the context of the House of Commons, will be determined behind closed doors. In the final analysis, the decision on whether or not to proceed with it will be made rather quietly, and then will or will not be proceeded with in accordance with what appears to be the over-all wishes of the majority of Members.

Therefore, I urge Hon. Members to pay particular attention to this matter because it could detrimentally or beneficially