

Supply

Is that not a nice job to have? "What did you do today?"

"I embarrassed the government today".

"Wow, what an accomplishment. How are you serving the people, your readers and so on? Did you supply them with truth today?"

"No, not necessarily, but I embarrassed the government".

"Were you honest today? Did you give them the five ws: who, what, why, when and where?"

"No, but I embarrassed the government. By cracky, I got them".

"Wonderful".

For example, Stevie Cameron, wonderful. She must feel proud: "Hey, God, I got three reputations; I've destroyed three people this week. Alleluia, what a week". Shakespeare said: "Steal my purse, you steal trash. Steal my reputation you steal my life". She and too many like her think it is honourable to go around stealing reputations.

The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, by naming off people in this place who have been found innocent and implying they are still guilty because they have been charged, is engaging in the same kind of behaviour. Then they wonder why this place does not get the respect it deserves from the public. Well, you get it by being fair, by being honest; you do not tolerate corruption but you do not accuse people of corrupt practices because they did not follow the interpretation of the rules that you put to them.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North is right. This place will come apart if we continue to engage in this kind of uncontrolled, irresponsible mud-slinging that is too often a part of what happens here.

If we treat each other with respect and if we do not assume that everybody on the other side is a crook and a thief; if we make sure that our accusations are based in fact, not suspicion; and if we do not immediately yell hurrah when we have reporters like Kennedy and Cobb out maligning people, we have a chance of regaining

some of the respect we have lost. If we do not do it, unfortunately this institution and this country are the losers.

I regret that we would spend a valuable day on such a subject, but in a sense I am grateful to the hon. member for giving me a chance to put these facts on the record.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, I would like to pose a couple of questions to the government House leader and to make a couple of comments.

I have a hunch that I do not represent many of the official views of most political parties in Canada by the position I am enunciating, but personally I have been disturbed over the last number of years at the call for strict, legislated regulatory guidelines making law out of standards of practice and ethics in government.

There are problems, one of which was evidenced to a large degree in the province of British Columbia in the last few years. We had a premier who had difficulty, it appeared, understanding the difference between standards of public conduct and standards of private business conduct and how we ought to keep them apart.

That is something elected politicians surely have to make a determination about for themselves, with their own standards and what they think are good standards. Ultimately it is up to the electorate to make a judgment whether any given government has stood the test of a generally held view of what is acceptable public conduct among politicians.

I can recall a discussion I had with a previous minister between 1980 and 1984. He is now a senator from the province of New Brunswick. We were discussing something outside this area. He said: "Every time any one of us is in opposition and we see what we think is an abuse, we say there has to be a law, there has to be a regulation, and we have to tighten things up. All it ends up doing in the long run is having cabinet ministers who cannot sometimes yield to common sense appeals because they are bound up in red tape, regulations and laws".

Personally, and I suspect I speak on behalf of a lot more people in the body politic out there than we sometimes care to recognize, I wish that more politicians