

Supply

or do not do, or what they should not have done. The narrow issue concerns whether they acted improperly or illegally. It seems to me that the Government is asking the House to prove that something illegal was done.

However, the other issue which has been before us since the beginning of the debate concerns whether or not the guidelines were broken. In view of the fact that several days ago the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) said that it is for Ministers to judge whether the guidelines are broken, how can the Canadian public and how can we as Members of the Opposition subscribe to such a system of guidelines when the decision whether or not they have been broken is left with individual Ministers who have an interest in the very issue which is raised?

The Minister has spent many years in the House. He will know, despite his complaints this morning about character assassination, that I as an Hon. Member have never entered into anything of that sort. I am concerned to know what the Minister thinks about what we and the public should think as to who is the judge of whether the guidelines have been broken. The guidelines in this case can be broken without any crime being committed.

● (1520)

An Hon. Member: Parliament is the judge.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Exactly, Mr. Speaker. That is why the Hon. Member and the rest of us got elected. Parliament is the judge. The conduct of all Hon. Members will be judged in this House. This House has to be satisfied, not on the basis of gossip or because of allegations that are highly politically motivated that fall within the pattern of conduct, as I explained this morning, on the part of the Leader of the Opposition, which is quite clearly discernible over a twenty year pattern, but on the basis of something that is demonstrable evidence, something other than gossip.

I have the highest respect for the Hon. Member, a lawyer from the West Coast. I know he knows the difference between gossip and demonstrable evidence. Would he please supply some demonstrable evidence? I am not saying in a court of law, but would he show us where the Minister indeed has been guilty of any of these smear allegations that have been made up to now? They have been totally unsubstantiated, that is all.

An Hon. Member: What is the use of guidelines if you do not respect them?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I am sorry to inform the Hon. Member that the ten-minute question period has expired, but I think I did hear an Hon. Member rise on a point of order. If not, debate.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, in beginning my remarks I want to echo two sentiments that were expressed by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) this morning. The first is that the issue here is not a question of personal reputation, not at all. The issue here is a question of

the integrity of the Parliament of Canada and the integrity of the Government of Canada. That is the issue in this debate.

The second, and I am pleased that the Minister of Finance himself chose to underline the importance of this matter, is that if it is important for all of us to be judged as men and women of integrity, then it is particularly important for some Ministers of the Crown to be so judged. That obligation rests with particular weight on the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), and as the Minister of Finance said today, its rests with particular weight upon the Minister of Finance.

There can be no question about the probity or honesty or integrity of the Minister of Finance. It is precisely because that question of the integrity of the Minister of Finance is so important that we are raising and pursuing this matter here and asking that it be judged by the impartial authority established by the law to judge exactly these questions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: If I may express a personal view, I regret that Parliament has to raise the matter. In my judgment, the Minister should have acted himself, as Ministers in the parliamentary tradition have acted before, and he should have resigned. That would have been the proper course of action. I need not remind the House of the practice that has been long established in the parliamentary tradition. We were reminded the other day, those of us who still read Richard Gwyn, of a case that is precisely on point which occurred in Great Britain, and I quote Mr. Gwyn:

In 1953, Agriculture Minister Thomas Dugdale resigned after discovering that junior officials, without telling him, had improperly failed to compensate farmers for expropriated lands.

He quotes the Minister:

"I take full responsibility for any mistakes done by my department," Dugdale said in his resignation speech, "just as when any officials bring off successes on my behalf, I take full credit for them".

That is the tradition, the practice and the standard that is followed in Parliaments that have a degree of self-respect and by Ministers who have a degree of self-respect.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: Closer to home, just to establish the Canadian tradition, I remind this House of the most regrettable resignation of the Hon. D'Arcy McKeough from the cabinet of the Government of Ontario. Why did Mr. McKeough resign from a central senior ministry? He said that it was because he felt he was guilty of no more than a mistake in judgment. On that basis, a man of honour in the Canadian parliamentary system set down his office. On that basis he resigned, as he should have, and as this Minister should have resigned.

We have had read into the record earlier today a most recent case, a compelling case, the case of a Minister who was probably the most important, next to the Prime Minister, in the Government of Great Britain, the case of Lord Carrington. Lord Carrington resigned from his position as the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, not because he made a mistake but simply because he failed to foresee an eventuality,