

Routine Proceedings

would be his third government job, and the idea that this will leave in people's minds is of very great significance.

Could the member for Victoria and his constituents actually look upon Bruce Phillips as a person who could carry on the job without any shadow of a doubt of a legacy with this government?

• (1620)

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. My constituents and people right across Canada will see this as a bad appointment, in part because we are making an issue of it. It is appropriate for us to do it because this appointment was not the subject of effective consultation and agreement on all sides of the House.

It seems to me important that all sides agree on a position as sensitive as this of an officer of the House. Only if we cannot agree after some extensive period of consultation on an appropriate name to go into this office should the government be forced to use its majority to ram somebody through.

However, we have not gone through that process. There has been limited discussion. The government said: "This is the appointment. Take it or leave it". Does the minister have an intervention or is she just mumbling to herself?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The minister does have an intervention. The Minister of Justice on a question or comment.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the remarks of the hon. member for Victoria. I am very pleased to hear that everybody is in consensus on Bruce Phillips' integrity.

I would also like to make a comment about Inger Hansen. The hon. member has suggested that the decision to appoint an Information Commissioner is in some way an offence to Inger Hansen. I think that is a very wrong conclusion to draw. Inger Hansen is a very distinguished individual. She is from British Columbia, and I can remember hearing her speak a number of years ago at UBC when she was the Privacy Commissioner. She served as Privacy Commissioner and then Information Commissioner.

I hope it is not a reflection of the fact that there was a shuffle at the end of February that the appropriate

representations have not been made to Ms. Hansen about her service. From my perspective or that of any government members that I know of there is certainly no intention to be in any way disrespectful of her.

I do hope the hon. member will recognize that it is a prerogative of this House and governments to renew and change appointments. Mr. Grace is following in a sense the same path that Ms. Hansen took: to be first Privacy Commissioner and then Information Commissioner. I would not want to leave the House with the impression that anyone on this side of the House considered Ms. Hansen to be anything but a very distinguished Canadian and a very distinguished public servant.

As she has said herself recently, she is still young and full of energy and eager for new challenges. I hope that she will continue to have opportunities to express herself in ways that are of benefit to the Canadian people and fulfilling to her as a human being.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Would the hon. member for Victoria like to rebut?

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the comments the Minister of Justice has made about Ms. Hansen.

I may say frankly, and I hope it does not sound churlish, that it is long overdue. There have been questions about her reappointment for sometime. There were questions reported in *The Ottawa Citizen*. Frank Howard commented on it a week ago. It has taken until now for the minister to make the statement. Perhaps it is an oversight in the busy life, but now that they are on the record I am sure it is appreciated by Canadians that she finally made those fair and appropriate comments about Ms. Hansen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will recognize the member for Dartmouth, and then I will recognize the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that this is an inappropriate appointment. I think the member for Victoria said it clearly. On the one hand we have somebody in the person of Inger Hansen who did her job as the Information Commissioner and was critical of the government. She appeared before one of the standing committees of Parliament last year and was extremely critical of the government for not allowing the spirit of the act to come through in the actual actions of the government.