

Morality in Government

The hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) today spoke in very injured tones about how his reputation had been compromised or had been damaged because of questions placed on the order paper designed to point out some wrongdoing on his part, of even a minor nature. In the same speech, when he decries that type of behaviour, the hon. member quotes from a speech that he gave on the C.B.C. embodying some of the most wide-sweeping generalizations of a smear nature containing a reference to "garbage cans" and a "whole government under suspicion." Yet, in the same breath he claims his reputation is being tarnished. When one complains, surely one must be prepared to acknowledge at the same time one's own shortcoming.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, I have a question of privilege. The hon. member, if I heard him correctly, a few moments ago said that the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) was guilty of wrongdoing. That statement should be withdrawn or substantiated.

Mr. Munro: It is too bad the hon. member did not listen. I said that he complained that there were questions placed on the order paper designed to point out that he was guilty of some wrongdoing.

Mr. Nielsen: Where did he get the information?

Mr. Byrne: Where did you get yours?

Mr. Munro: If the hon. member wishes to remove subtle threats placed on the order paper, he will have to find some consistency in his own conduct, I refer to the hon. member for the Yukon, because after I made a speech in Toronto complaining about members demeaning themselves by scurrying around the halls trying to get something on one another, I can remember the hon. member's comments then. I think he met me a few days after and said he had received letters from my constituents complaining that I was using my privilege of air travel to give political speeches.

Mr. Nielsen: That is true.

Mr. Munro: He was going to take some policing action in this matter. The hon. member does not know that I gave a personal cheque for that particular air fare.

The hon. member for Brandon-Souris was complaining bitterly about this type of procedure. Surely this is another example of inconsistency on the part of us all. All of us

collectively have been responsible for what has taken place. I would think that if the hon. member for Royal (Mr. Fairweather) wishes to talk about political morality not only in our tactics but in our everyday conduct of affairs as parliamentarians, one tactic is the framing of a motion of non-confidence in the government. I would think that a lot of political morality is involved in that type of tactic. Surely he is aware, as are all of us as members of parliament, when these rumours are going about and when there are wide-sweeping generalizations being made based on unfounded implication and innuendo that, as the words of the motion indicate unquestionably: "this destroys the independence or certainly impairs the independence of all of us as members of parliament". How could this action in respect of the ordering of files, as came out at a royal commission hearing have done this type of damage as set out in this amendment, when in fact we know that has happened to us as members of parliament through our course of conduct and through the collective action of all of us for the last three and a half years.

How can this pat and convenient device—I refer to the use of the revelation which came forth four or five days ago at a royal commission hearing—be placed upon one man as his wrongdoing? I say we should all be prepared to accept our shortcomings and do something about them. I should think that a new point of departure for us as members would be to accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles); we should forget trying to dig up dirt on one another and get on with the business of the country.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this motion of non-confidence in the government with very deep feelings, because I can speak as a member of the privy council and can say flatly that one of the first instructions I received on being sworn into the council was that under no circumstances was I to probe into any file of the previous administration.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Hamilton: As a member of the privy council I can say that I was instructed on the first day of my being sworn into office that I must remove myself from all business transactions because my judgment as a minister might be affected, and I assume that instruction applied to all the ministers who were sworn in ahead of me. I can state, Mr.