

In the same way, Miss Corrado was simply doing her job. She passed out pillows to Conservative delegates. As we all know, when we go to political conventions we are in happy moods. Everyone was joking and laughing and Miss Corrado naturally thought that they were on a vacation. She asked where they were going and they said they were going to the Progressive Conservative Convention. In a humorous manner, she said: "Gee, if I knew you were going there, I would not have given you the pillows". Can you blame her for saying that she would not give pillows to people who were going to a Progressive Conservative Convention, Mr. Speaker? She was joking. She made a comic remark, but Conservative Members are showing how paranoid they are today as they shake their heads negating the joke. I am sure that the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune shot into Conservative Members by Miss Corrado will see the survival of the Progressive Conservative Party. I do not think the Progressive Conservative Party will lose the next election because of the comments made by Miss Corrado.

I have had comments made to me on aeroplanes that I would not dare repeat in the House of Commons. If I did, I would probably be named. That is a part of the business we are in. That is a part of the political job. There are people who slap me on the back and say: "Go after them, go over chairs and tables, through hills and dales". Some people support us. Others say: "You made a horse's behind out of yourself the other night when you did so and so".

An Hon. Member: You're right.

Ms. Copps: That comes with the territory. The Hon. Member says that I am right. When Miss Corrado made the comments she made to the Progressive Conservative Party delegates she was expressing her feelings, and that is the right of any Canadian. Presumably when one signs up for a job with a Crown corporation one is not required to sign away rights as a citizen. Employees of Crown corporations are still protected by the Charter and have the same rights and obligations as every other Canadian citizen. They have the right to free speech.

I cannot understand why the Minister of Transport, who has been seen by most as an honourable and reasonable Member, did not read the letter from the Progressive Conservative delegate from British Columbia, see how offensive it was to any Canadian who believes in the right of free speech and stick it in a garbage can. The Minister should have recognized that every Canadian including Canadians employed by Crown corporations have the right to free speech. If he does not recognize that, then he must answer a question.

I have here a copy of a letter which was sent to various members of the Conservative Government signed by a concerned Canadian from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The letter reads as follows:

Dear Sir

I find the notoriety surrounding the suspension of an Air Canada flight attendant very distressing. I am most concerned because in September I will be

Supply

taking a flight from Saskatoon to Toronto and am worried about what are acceptable topics of conversation with the flight attendants other than deciding what beverage to have with the in-flight meal.

Knowing that the present Government has contingency plans for all situations, could you please send me a list of acceptable topics that would not cause any repercussions when engaging in conversation with flight attendants.

I hope that you can act as quickly as possible on this request as I hate to take the three hour flight without saying anything for fear of treading on sensitive areas.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

The letter is signed by L. Wilner from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

When the Wilners from Saskatchewan feel that way, when the deli owners from the Byward Market are silenced for introducing Sink Stevens sandwiches and when an ordained United Church minister is faced with criminal prosecution for bringing to public attention a situation about which he feels so strongly that he cannot in good conscience keep silent, then we have the seeds of intimidation sown by a Government that is living in paranoia.

I believe the Minister of Transport probably passed along the letter without having actually read it. We all know that Ministers are very busy. Perhaps it was read by an assistant who made a bad political judgment. Given that a bad political judgment was made and it was the Government that precipitated this investigation by Air Canada into the comments of Miss Corrado, I would ask that the Government through the auspices of the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Nielsen) and the Prime Minister launch a directive under the Financial Administration Act.

• (1610)

Government Members say they do not want to interfere in the process between union and management and the course of events which naturally transpire through a collective agreement. But their argument does not hold water when you realize it was the intervention of the Government that in the first place caused the complaint to be brought to light. I would suggest that one possible way of dealing with this matter is to have a directive launched under the Financial Administration Act, which is provided for, so that any government, and the Minister of Transport can prevail upon Air Canada. In this particular instance, given that Miss Corrado was so clearly exercising her right to free speech as guaranteed by the Charter, it is incumbent upon Air Canada to drop the complaint and to cease and desist immediately with this campaign of harassment.

[Translation]

And Mr. Speaker, since it was after all the Government who lodged this complaint after receiving a letter from a Tory delegate attending the party's convention in Montreal, why can't the Government now inform Air Canada directly that a directive will be issued under the Financial Administration Act to put an end to the harassment of this employee, since all she has tried to do is to stand on her own rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms? We are talking about