

Privilege—Mr. Robinson

If one looks at page 149 of Erskine May and the words of the heading: "Corruption in the execution of their office as Members", there is no doubt that is something which can be found to be a misconduct by Members and, I submit, can lead to their being found to have breached the privileges of the House, resulting in their expulsion.

I think there are grounds for finding that there has been a *prima facie* case of breach of privilege arising out of the conduct of the Member for Chambly (Mr. Grisé). If that is the case, of course, it would be open to a Member to present a motion to the House which would then be debatable and could be voted upon.

However, I think one has to look upon this in a realistic way, which is, that unless the Government itself agrees to accept the motion, or unless the Government proposes the motion, then it will not be adopted.

I think that in this case the Government itself has a particular responsibility. It has a responsibility because, first, the Member for Chambly was elected and sat as a Conservative until the charges were laid against him. It would appear from the press reports at least, that the incidents which led to the charges took place while the Member for Chambly was a Member of the Government caucus. I am not suggesting that other Members of the caucus knew about this, but he was a Member of that caucus.

Second, the Government, through its House Leader, has a special responsibility for the integrity and good name of this House. Of course, responsibility for the integrity and good name of this House is something in which we all share, but I say that the Government, especially through its House Leader, has a special responsibility. Therefore, I call upon the Government through its House Leader to accept that responsibility and be prepared to deal with this matter immediately through the appropriate motion.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, as Members of the House of Commons we all have a responsibility to protect the reputation of this House and its privileges. And I submit that the Government, through its parliamentary House leader, has a special responsibility for that reputation, for the good name of this House. Mr. Speaker, in the case of the Hon. Member for Chambly, it is a very special responsibility, because until the Hon. Member withdrew from the Tory Caucus, he sat as a Tory Member and he was

elected as a Member for the Conservative Party. The incidents that led to the charges to which he pleaded guilty occurred while the Hon. Member for Chambly was a member of the Tory caucus, and as I said a few moments ago, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to press the fact that members of the Tory caucus were aware of these events, but it is true that the Hon. Member, during this important period, was a member of the Tory caucus. And, as I said before, the Government, through its parliamentary House leader, has a very special responsibility for the reputation of this House. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Government House leader to take that responsibility and to move the appropriate motion in this House as soon as possible.

[English]

That is the kind of action we need in the interests of the good name of this House and our parliamentary system.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I rise to take part in this discussion with regret as to the subject matter and with regret as to the timing of the suggestions made by my colleagues opposite.

My argument will be technical and it will be conventional. First, I want to say that there are not many precedents in this matter, but one of the precedents is that all steps of appeal should be exhausted.

The conviction was registered on Tuesday, May 23, 1989, I understand in the morning. It is now the morning of Thursday, May 25, 1989. I understand that the Member served a short time in jail *vis-à-vis* the sentence of one day. I understand that he can still appeal the terms of probation and the fine, as can the Crown. There are two appeals that can be lodged.

I take it as hearsay from my colleague, although I have no reason to believe he would mislead the House, that the Crown has said it is satisfied with the sentence. But I have no knowledge of that myself.

There is also an opportunity for the individual to appeal. All of our laws have appeal periods for a very good reason. That is to protect the rights of the Crown and of the individual. No matter what we may think of the sentence, no matter what we may think of the crime, no matter what we may think of the individual, I think it behooves us to respect that appeal period. It is due process of law. It is not always easy to defend due process