

Supply

critic. It is harder for women parliamentarians to reintegrate to society just as it is harder for women economically in a number of areas.

• (1210)

That is not the issue. We are not people to be felt sorry for. This is the greatest job on earth as far as I am concerned. This job is incredible. I think a lot of us would do it if we could even if we did not get paid.

Mind you, I want to make a point very strongly in agreeing with the Deputy Prime Minister, the member for Hamilton East, that we are worth what we get paid. The member for Beaver River is worth a lot of money to the people of Canada and so is the member for Calgary Centre, I guess—yes, no—and so is the member for Mississauga South. We are all worth our salaries. We work hard.

There may be some but I personally have no knowledge of members of Parliament who do not, as one journalist called it, have the work schedules of dray horses. I also think that we enjoy these schedules. That does not mean we should not be remunerated. It also means that it is not a simplistic issue that can be easily dealt with. That is why I again congratulate the member for Beaver River for bringing it forward and for giving the opportunity for debate in this House.

I want to talk about something in particular because I think it is important. I think that I as a very partisan member of this House perhaps can say this where some others might not be able to. We have to treat each other with respect and dignity when dealing with this issue. I thought about cracking wise about this but the people of Canada and the people in this Chamber deserve better than that from all of us. This is a serious issue.

Members opposite are quite right when they say we have to be credible as we say to the people of Canada that cuts are coming, that we are changing what we do, that we are putting our own house in order. Again, that is why I support the red book promise.

Some comments were made in particular about the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, my whip, a veteran of this House and a veteran of the Ontario legislature, someone who has given long and hard to public service. I certainly do not want to embarrass the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell but given the comments by the member for Kootenay West, I am not sure if he knows a bit about the history of the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell who started as a busboy in one of the parliamentary cafeterias, who worked his way up, who is absolutely a glowing example of a Canadian success story.

I do not think anybody on either side of this House would deny that there is no better constituency MP in the House of Commons than the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. That is one of the reasons that he gets returned with amazing majorities. I think the last one was somewhere around 85 per

cent. There is a quote about the longest serving premier in a Canadian province who was a Liberal premier of Nova Scotia many years. I have a picture of him in my kitchen with a caption that states: "He trusts the people and the people trust him". I think that is a tremendous thing for a person elected to political office to attain. I think that could be said about the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

When we debate this issue, it is an emotional issue. All of us are emotionally concerned in our own futures. We are all of us concerned for ourselves and our families and we all of us know that these matters are of tremendous importance to us. I do not for an instant accuse the hon. member from the opposition of being unparliamentary. I just want him to know that when the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell or the hon. member for Mississauga South or any hon. members in this House stand and speak passionately about any issue, whether it is our remuneration as members of Parliament, whether it is issues that relate to our constituents, whether it is issues that relate to Canada as a whole, and I know that the member for Beaver River agrees with me on this, we all deserve the respect of our peers and colleagues. We all deserve not to be accused of making these statements for personal gain. That is what I found very difficult in those earlier comments.

• (1215)

As I said, I think perhaps he was unaware of the history of this particular member who is, has been and will continue to be a benefit and an adornment to this House.

This debate has in the past been acrimonious. It has in the past used the logical fallacy *ad hominem*. I am winding up. I know who is coming in. It has in the past created a great deal of sound a fury, signifying nothing.

In closing, everyone who is here, whether it is the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, the hon. member for Beaver River or other hon. members, we are all aware that our role as members of Parliament is one of integrity, decency and deserving of respect.

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister, the member for Hamilton East, has said in this debate that she will not apologize for the remuneration of members of Parliament. I want to say that I stand four square with her and with other members of the government on that level. Members of Parliament deserve their remuneration. We also need to air these issues, discuss them publicly and to ensure that the people of Canada see that we do respect each other and each other's opinions.

I believe last week the hon. member for Beaver River suggested that I would collect I think it was in excess of \$1 million if I were to retire today, the day after my qualifying for a pension. I want to assure the member for Beaver River that I have absolutely no intention of retiring today. I hope I would have no intention of retiring long err this. I would imagine that