

*Morality in Government*

to a certain extent misgivings as to what is taking place.

● (9:50 p.m.)

When I listened to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) tonight make what I thought was a reasonable plea to all members of the house, that perhaps the time had come for us to get back to discussing issues rather than personalities, I thought that perhaps his reasoned approach to the debate at hand might have had some influence on the tone of debate.

Mr. Speaker, this is why in a moment of anger I began my speech by expressing my opinion about the remarks made by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton). What I then expressed is still my opinion. However, I think the speeches today as well as many of the speeches made on the estimates of the Department of Justice reflect growing misgivings by members on all sides of the house at this insidious attitude creeping into the house, because it is a dangerous attitude, and is one with which nobody seems to be happy.

We should once and for all rid the House of Commons of this type of atmosphere of which no member that I know feels happy. None of us, Mr. Speaker, who go home on the week end go home without feeling a certain amount of relief at getting out of this atmosphere. None of us know from what corner of the house the next ill-founded charge will be levelled at some surprised, inoffensive member of the house. I say that sincerely, because such a charge could come from this side of the house as well as from the other side. It simply amazes me, knowing most people here individually, that collectively we have created the atmosphere which has led to this sorry state of affairs. When hon. members stand up and say that people on the street today are taking a second look at parliament and asking what is happening, I think it is time that we realized that we are embarked on a course of self-destruction.

Members on both sides of this house, and of course I speak for myself also, have not come here for monetary gain. They have come here because they really feel that in this the highest court of the land they may have an opportunity, perhaps once in a lifetime, of doing something for their fellow Canadians in some field or another.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to cure the present attitude in the house we should review what has led up to it, not for the purpose of dishing out blame to any individual member or to any parties, or to

[Mr. Mackasey.]

any segments of parties, but to try to understand what has brought it about.

It would seem to me that some of the older members of the house, and even some hon. members who were here during the last ten or 15 years, can remember a time when they debated political issues, fiercely, and after that walked out of the House of Commons arm in arm. Today it is different. Today you are afraid to speak to a member on the other side of the house because you do not know when that member is going to stand up in the House of Commons and use in debate the confidential remarks you have made to him. That has happened all too frequently. Again, I am not pinpointing any particular individual, but I think all of us know that what I say is accurate and true.

Some people here have said, "Oh, it is because of the Rivard case, and because of the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), that we have these troubles". I am looking at the clock, Mr. Speaker. Let me say that I participated in that debate. In fairness to the hon. member for Yukon and to the hon. member who now leads the New Democratic Party, let me express my opinion as a simple backbencher that in that particular debate they were doing what they were sent to parliament to do, which was, as members of the opposition, to make sure that the government of the day or any of its members were not doing things that they were conveniently pushing under the rug.

The Dorion probe came about through the skilful and insistent prodding of the opposition. I think the Dorion probe was a necessity. But somewhere along the line, Mr. Speaker, events occurred that created the atmosphere where this type of inquisition, legal or otherwise, continued. Again I am not pointing the finger at any particular individual.

We went through the Dorion probe with all its emotional arguments, and tomorrow when I resume debate I mean to read my remarks made at the time, which were very short and inconsequential, but which expressed at that time how I felt about the House of Commons and how I still feel about it. We went from the Dorion probe to the discussion of the furniture scandals. Tonight an hon. member of this house lies on his deathbed in the hospital with a heart attack. He is a man in his forties. His family well know that what brought on the heart attack were the charges that the newspapers of this country laid at his doorstep, when they connected him with the furniture deals. I predicted this precisely