

Everybody sits back and says: "What did you do, Broadview—Greenwood? How much did you get in your pocket? If you did not, the other guys got some. What is wrong with you?" That is the kind of thing they say. That is what hurts us all.

I think this is a disgraceful debate. It should never have been brought forward. It does not do any of us any good. It does not accomplish anything and it does nothing for the development of a better Canada.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member from Mississauga a question. He understandably seems to be placing a lot of faith in what appears to be an all-party agreement to set up a code or new standard of ethics. He hopes it will be settled by just one speaker from each party.

I want to repeat some of the reservations I had earlier. Part of my experience with recent events in British Columbia is if you have a written legislated code of ethics and standards all you end up doing is providing a certain list and as long as someone in public life does not fall within the definition of those things that are listed in that code, they think they are free and clear.

I am not at all sure that we would be much better off, whether the public would accept it or not, to adopt the British system. I think within parliamentary democracies, its standard of public conduct among government officials and ministers is to almost immediately step aside when any kind of legitimate accusation is made until the matter is settled. The perception in Britain is much greater.

Maybe I am just too far away from its press. It has a pretty active press and we hear about a lot of the rest of it. My hunch is that its standards are perceived to be much higher than those in the United States which are going further and further toward codifying, regulating and listing all the shalls and shall nots.

I am worried about selling the public and ourselves a false bill of goods simply because we cannot come to an agreement to put this issue on the shelf and put it behind us by unanimously agreeing to some grand thing called a code of ethics.

We must be willing to look at the public at election time and between elections and let them have it right

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between the eyes, and say: "If you are fed up with the standards that you think exist in public life, then you are the people who are responsible for it. You make sure that apart from the issues of the economy and others, it is one that you take seriously when you judge the kind of people who individually you want to elect regardless of party when you come to cast your ballot".

We have to place the responsibility with them in as open a way as possible and in a way as unregulated as possible. Unless we have a standard of ethics of public office and public conduct, I do not think we are going to solve our problems.

I would like to get some response. I know we have some agreement.

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, in the committee we analysed the British system.

The British system, as the member may know, is indeed quite free. There are no written rules really. The trouble is that members are permitted to serve on boards of directors of corporations dealing with the government, to be actively involved lobbying for a particular activity. They do not need a lobbyist registration act, the members of Parliament act as lobbyists.

I do not think that we would want to do that. I have real grave concerns about the British system.

What we have with the jurisconsult approach is a much more flexible arrangement. It is really a well respected person who becomes jurisconsult who really runs the show. To some extent it is like the British Columbia system, though quite a bit more restricted than that. We had some difficulty with some of the ways things could happen in British Columbia, some of the ownership arrangements, selling arrangements, dealing arrangements and so on.

We analysed British Columbia thoroughly. We analysed Ontario and Quebec thoroughly. We had the former premier of Ontario and other members of the Ontario legislature from all parties as witnesses to our hearings. They seemed to have developed in Ontario and in Quebec a system of controlling these matters in a far more civilized and sane fashion than we have to date.

In Ontario they have a commissioner who is a former judge. You disclose to him and if you are accused of something, you are tried by him. He operates as judge, jury and executioner, so to speak.