

Morality in Government

I was surprised to hear the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Douglas), whom I hold in high regard, say, after admitting the Prime Minister's honesty: But after all, what does the Prime Minister intend to do with all this information? What evidence do we have that he does not intend to use it to compromise some member of the house?

I believe that the evidence we have is what the leader of the New Democratic Party recognized a while ago: the honesty of the Prime Minister and the fact that he has given his word of honour.

What more can be asked of him? I presume the leader of the New Democratic Party would not ask the Prime Minister to kneel in the center of the house to beg forgiveness for what he himself calls an admission. I cannot imagine that he could ask for such a thing.

Besides, I find that the amendment on which we will vote is machiavellian to a certain extent. It comes from a side of the house which, for two or three years, has been accusing the government of hiding scandals, of condoning to a certain extent all kinds of wrongdoing, of encouraging all kinds of crimes. And now the Prime Minister is accused of going where he found such information, that is the R.C.M.P.—such information cannot be found elsewhere—to find out if anything can be held against any member of parliament. It seems to me that he showed courage in view of the fact that—and those who are here know it—he asked some of his closest collaborators to resign following information he received. Therefore, he had the courage of his convictions and we should pay tribute to his courage and integrity.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mongrain: Besides, Mr. Speaker, we find something else shocking. It is the fact that some learned lawyers agreed to play that game. I have a deep respect for the bar, even if at times I thank the Good Lord for not making a lawyer out of me. I see many lawyers who do a thing which appears to me to go against their professional ethics: they allow themselves to bring here all the evidence given to a royal commission, to evaluate it, to weigh it, to read it as they wish, and in some cases they lean obviously on the side of their own electoral interests. It has always seemed to me, as an ordinary man, that it was against the most elementary decency to do such things and that the house should give the judge who is hearing the evidence time to

[Mr. Mongrain.]

complete his case and submit his findings before getting into the act.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mongrain: Another thing surprises me in all that, Mr. Speaker. I just want to point out that everything that is happening now is the result of an unfortunate state of mind, which, as everyone said, is beginning to discredit parliament before public opinion. One or two members here, for whom I have a deep respect, should use their authority to say that things have gone far enough.

If this is not stopped as soon as possible, it will become a sort of electoral Russian roulette turning against the leaders of the main parties in the house. A sort of parliamentary masochism is being allowed which scandalizes public opinion and only kills in the rising generation any respect for the institution of parliament which we are trying to restore and promote in every way.

In my opinion, the two old parties should cease these overly violent and partisan battles. I think that we should instead discuss the value of future legislation and better ways to ensure the public good. Like many others who spoke before me, I believe that this is what the leaders of the two old parties should be concerned with, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, since it is he, in fact, who raises or allows these objections. He said that this is his role. I know it is, but his objection must be based on the discussion of bills promoting the good of the nation; it must not lead to discussion of slander or be inspired by obsessions which every day bring up in the house sickening details which we discuss to the great disgust of the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, I shall vote against the motion tonight because I do not want to be party to this waste of time and all these scandals, this whole sickening atmosphere which has been allowed to pervade this house far too long.

I shall resume my seat after this plea because, again, I respect the Leader of the Opposition. I ask him to put an end to all this slander as soon as possible.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Cape Breton South.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member in his remarks