

Morality in Government

the history of Canada. This is not the kind of parliament that any of us in the House of Commons wants. Therefore, I call on the leadership of this house. In particular I call on the leaders of the two main parties, the leader of the government and the leader of the opposition, to eschew this method of carrying on, to say we have had enough of it, and to give leadership in constructive battling over real issues. I believe they can. But if they cannot respond to that challenge which is coming to them from all over the country, then they know what the country is saying they ought to do.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. J. C. Munro (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as a member of parliament I would also like to make a few comments with reference to this debate. I could not help but be very impressed with the speech just made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). I believe all hon. members basically agree with just about everything he said.

I also believe many hon. members were impressed with certain aspects of the speech made by the hon. member for Royal (Mr. Fairweather). I say certain aspects advisedly because I think it is unfortunate that in the latter part of his speech he tried to frame it into a partisan, no-confidence motion in the government. When he talked about public morality on the part of all members of parliament, in fact he was talking about the conduct of all members of parliament in all parties as exemplified by our behaviour over a period of three or four years.

One could take about two thirds of his speech and say it would be a pretty effective indictment of parliament as a whole, rather than of the government, and so it is unfortunate that his speech had to be twisted for that particular purpose. But one thing that he has accomplished is that he has brought the subject out for further discussion.

In many parts of his speech he suggested that the type of poisoning that has been taking place in this parliament is a thing we have all contributed to in a collective way. He got that message through pretty well before he put forward the motion of no confidence. But I think it was a pretty superficial subterfuge to try to place the blame for what is wrong in this parliament on one hon. member, irrespective of whether he be the Prime Minister or not; and that, in fact,

is what has been done by this motion. It is most unfair and I think it is beneath the reputation of the hon. member who moved the motion, an hon. member for whom many of us have the highest respect.

We realize that the disclosure by the commissioner of the R.C.M.P. at this particular hearing was an irresistible temptation to take political advantage of a party and to heap abuse and blame for all that has taken place on the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) who, it is alleged, ordered these files. But we all know basically that this is not the root cause, or anything related to it. We all know that what has been going on has been growing for three or four years.

The substantive words of the motion refer to—

—a course of action which would destroy the independence of all members and undermine the institution of parliament.

I submit that this has been effectively done over a period of three or four years by the action of all of us in a collective sense. We are all members of political parties. We all take part in party caucuses. We have to share our responsibility for this type of compromise in our role as members of parliament.

To use this particular disclosure by the R.C.M.P. as a springboard for heaping all the abuse and blame on one man is beneath the dignity of all hon. members, and we should desist from it now if we are to adopt a constructive course and put an end to this action. Its having been stated that the Prime Minister ordered these files then, of course, all the assumptions referred to by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) came into play this afternoon.

But even assuming for the sake of argument that these files were in fact ordered by the Prime Minister, following that allegation there is a mighty big assumption which has been made by hon. members that the files were ordered with malice aforethought, to be used for threatening members of parliament and to blacken the reputations of members of parliament. There are no facts to substantiate that type of assumption, but it is an allegation which has been made at random throughout the house all afternoon. Yet the very ones who make that type of generalization are the people who say this type of conduct must cease if we are to save the institution of parliament.

I do not for one moment impute that type of motive to the Prime Minister. I know the