

*Interim Supply*

sceptical as to the qualifications, the earnestness and the capacities of parliamentarians, and for the very reason that members of parliament take advantage of the immunity from arrest to bring any accusation against persons outside the house.

We are here to illustrate democracy, whereas statements like the one made by the member for Mégantic do nothing else than ridicule and downgrade democracy. This is really unfortunate, Mr. Chairman.

When the member for Mégantic attacks municipal authorities, quoting embezzlements and frauds, does he fully realize the seriousness and the significance of such accusations? Is he fully aware of the fact that he is tarnishing the good name of reputable people and that, being himself protected by his immunity from arrest, nobody can take legal action against him?

I say to the member for Mégantic that he is the House of Commons' own Yves Gabias, and since he is the Gabias of the Commons, we should take action against him. In the circumstances, the only action that can be taken is to have his case referred to the committee on privileges and elections, and to bring before it the statements and the accusations made by the member for Mégantic and have the committee report to the house on the conduct of the member.

I claim, Mr. Chairman, what we are going to have a second Yves Gabias case, at the federal level instead of the provincial.

So, I deplore the charges made by the member for Mégantic, I deplore his excessive language and I say that if the prestige of parliament is to be maintained, we should take action against those who are not conscious of their own utterances and who lack a sense of responsibility.

We know that the parish priest, the mayor and the coroner of Notre-Dame-de-la-Guadeloupe formally denied the utterances of the member. There must be something to such a denial. We must clear up the whole matter. I repeat that, in order to maintain the luster and the prestige of parliament, we should take whatever means required to prevent members from making such wild statements which cannot fail to tarnish our reputation. So, let there be light, and let the commons' own Yves Gabias be called before the committee on privileges and elections.

[Mr. Choquette.]

• (1:40 p.m.)

[English]

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, I want to speak very briefly on the subject that has been dealt with by several hon. members in the course of this debate. A supporter of the government, when that government was charged with failing to meet the challenge of the increasing cost of living, excused the government because it is in a minority position.

Several months ago the government went to the people with a clear call for a majority, which was rejected by the electors of Canada. It was rejected, I suggest, because the people of Canada did not have sufficient confidence in the Liberal party to give that party a majority, believing that it was necessary to have others in the house, presenting other points of view, and calling the government to account for matters in which it was delinquent.

I do not believe that the failure by this government to meet the challenge inherent in the increasing cost of living can be excused because the government has no majority. We in this party suggest that when the government is prepared to bring in legislation to assist in reversing the cost of living trend in this country, it will not have to be concerned about its lack of majority, because that majority will be assured inasmuch as members of parliament would like to assist the government in reversing such a trend.

Across the country there is a general concern about the continuing upward spiral in the cost of living. This topic of conversation is ever present when one speaks to ordinary persons from day to day, either on the street or in the stores. Housewives who go to shopping centres, taking carts around the aisles, trying to fill their weekly grocery lists constantly object to the ever decreasing purchasing power of their dollar. Communications coming to the desks of all members of parliament call attention to this serious situation pleading that something be done to check the cost of living increase. That increase is continually reducing the purchasing power of the Canadian dollar.

When we pick up our newspapers and magazines we constantly see articles referring to this situation. The writers wonder just how far it is going to go, and why something is not being done to correct it. I believe it is the responsibility not only of the present administration but of any administration in a