

this flight. He was not there and I was not there. It is a question of fact to be determined by someone. Is the Hon. Member suggesting that we should short-circuit the procedure under the collective agreement to have these facts established by whatever tribunal, or by whatever method is provided for under that agreement? Maybe he does not have all the facts in this matter.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to concede that it is entirely possible that there is information that I do not have. There is information which I do have which I have not even put on the record because I did not want to get into whether one person was right or another person was right. In my opinion that is not what we are discussing today.

Let me put it this way. The letter clearly sets out the complaint. The complaint was that the flight attendant "continued to complain about you and the Progressive Conservative Government and their interference during the last strike." That was the complaint. The answer to it is simple. It is the right of any Canadian to complain about the Government's actions or the actions of the Minister. That is the answer. There need have been nothing more done about it.

I am suggesting that by not taking that action the Government made this into a problem for that young woman. It places her in a position in which she is denied the rights to which she is entitled under the law. It places the matter in a forum that is absolutely inappropriate for dealing with matters such as this.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I too am happy to join in this debate. Notwithstanding the Government's protestations, there are a great many Canadians who are very concerned about what this particular issue does to their rights and freedoms as individuals. If in fact the Corrado incident on the Air Canada flight to the Progressive Conservative convention was an isolated incident we could say that it was a mistake, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) inadvertently passed along this letter which set in motion a series of events that led to the suspension of this particular airline attendant.

In fact, in the 19 months since the election of the Conservatives to Government we have seen a consistent campaign of harassment with respect to individuals exercising their right to freedom of speech as guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I am reminded of the infamous memo concerning the Buffalo Jump question.

It seems to me that when members of the Conservative Party were in opposition they were very happy to encourage those rights as was mentioned earlier. We can remember the infamous case of Neil Fraser in which the very person who was paid by the Government to promote metric made a *cause célèbre* out of dumping on metric for all and sundry. He even took it to his platform in the Progressive Conservative leadership campaign. The Conservatives did not complain at that time.

Supply

Mr. Shields: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) would not want to mislead the House. She referred to the infamous Fraser case saying that the individual was paid by the Government to promote metric. He was not. He was an employee of the Department of National Revenue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That could be a matter for debate. The Hon. Member for Hamilton East.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the point is that when the Progressive Conservatives were in opposition they certainly delighted in encouraging the free speech of every citizen. Unfortunately, as soon as they were elected to government we saw a radical change in their position. I think of the Buffalo Jump situation because here is an example of an individual who was distraught when he learned of plans by the Progressive Conservative Government to cut back on programs for native Canadians. In fact, he allowed that information to enter into the public domain. In other words, he leaked a document, a document which served to embarrass the Conservative Government and force it to back-pedal on a program which would have wreaked devastation on the native community. That program, under the auspices of the Deputy Prime Minister, was known as the Buffalo Jump program.

What was the reaction of the members of the Progressive Conservative Government at that time? Was it to be as magnanimous as it was to Neil Fraser who went on to become a candidate for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party? No. Not only did they fire the civil servant in question, not only did they terminate his services, they also moved to prosecute him. In fact, Robert Price, an ordained United Church minister and a former senior manager within the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, earned the dubious distinction of being the first civil servant ever to be charged under the Criminal Code for leaking a cabinet document. That was the first issue in which we saw a former civil servant prosecuted under the Criminal Code for the leaking of a document.

Miss Carney: We have established that you are in favour of breaking the law.

Ms. Copps: The Hon. Member for Vancouver Centre (Miss Carney) says I am in favour of breaking the law. It seems to me that when Neil Fraser was speaking out for the Conservatives as a candidate for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party not only was he lauded and applauded but he was encouraged in the same way as a former member of the RCMP was encouraged by the Conservatives to continue leaking documents. When they came into power he was rewarded by being given a promotion. It seems interesting that since the Conservatives have come to power there is a thread of persecution and harassment which seems to underlie all of the activities which they undertake, not only in the House of Commons but outside it as well. Let us just look to the Prime Minister. When did he fire a cabinet Minister? Was it when