

Supply

employee used every possible means to make sure her case would be examined peacefully. I find it absolutely amazing that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) did not immediately grasp the serious nature of the case and did not act. If someone erred in his office, in the correspondence section, he should have acted immediately and informed Air Canada not to consider that letter, that correspondence between his office and Air Canada as an instruction from the Minister's office to suspend or fire that employee.

Since he failed to do so, and the employee was suspended, I believe the Minister of Transport now has an overwhelming responsibility towards that employee, who has been in my view unfairly suspended for the slight offence of telling the truth to the Conservative Government.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate with the Hon. Member for Cariboo—Chilcotin (Mr. Greenaway).

Mr. McKenzie: Now we will hear the truth.

Mr. Lorne Greenaway (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, generally I preface my remarks—

Mr. Angus: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, let me point out to you that the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Assiniboine (Mr. McKenzie) made some reference to hearing the truth. I ask that you request that he withdraw that statement.

Mr. McKenzie: Sit down!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I never heard a thing. I can read the "blues" and report.

Ms. Coppins: It was not worth hearing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I never heard that. The Hon. Member for Cariboo—Chilcotin in debate.

Mr. Greenaway: Mr. Speaker, it is certainly not a pleasure to take part in this debate. I have been here only for the last hour but I have never heard such drivel. I agree with my colleagues, I think the House of Commons has hit a new low this afternoon. This is the subject matter you people want to bring up in the House of Commons when we are supposed to be busy with economic matters and everything else—

Ms. McDonald: Charter of Rights.

Mr. Greenaway: Charter of Rights? With rights goes responsibility. That stewardess—

Mr. Angus: Flight attendant.

Mr. Greenaway: Flight attendant. Her job is to treat people in a professional and polite manner.

Mr. Benjamin: She did.

Mr. Greenaway: That is her responsibility. No one said she cannot speak, but she certainly has a responsibility to people.

The reason I wanted to speak this afternoon for a few minutes is that the integrity of people in my riding has been called into question. I want to tell Hon. Members that the five women on that plane are probably five of the nicest women I know. I have known them for at least 20 years. They are highly regarded in my community. They do not go out looking for fights. They got on that airplane at 12 o'clock midnight to go to Toronto and Montreal. They asked for pillows and blankets. From that point on they were berated by this flight attendant, and it was a very sad situation. Air Canada has a world-wide reputation for good service. I think it just recently won an award for it. Surely to goodness it has the right to discipline a member of its staff who, with all respect, it appears has really overstepped the bounds. To turn this House of Commons into a grievance forum I think is just not right.

Mr. Benjamin: Every citizen has a right to approach Parliament.

Mr. Greenaway: This matter is going through the proper process and I am not going into the details of what I have been told about what happened that night because I respect the grievance process. I have counselled the people in Williams Lake to say nothing because it would jeopardize the grievance process. Mrs. Ford has been blamed for writing the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski). She never asked me where to write the letter because she thought that was the place to write the letter. She happened to have met the Minister last fall at a dinner in Williams Lake. The other reason she wrote to him was that the flight attendant was so abusive about the Minister.

Mr. Benjamin: It did not bother the Minister.

Mr. Greenaway: It was for those reasons she wrote the Minister the letter. If she had known that the proper procedure was to write Air Canada, she would have done so. She felt a certain sense of outrage. I think everyone has the right to complain without having to fear they are going to be dragged into a forum like this. This is a very sad day, and I feel as a Member that I have to stand up and say—

Ms. Coppins: "Dear Don".

Mr. Greenaway: I think we have letters on file from the Leader of the NDP to the Minister of Transport saying "Dear Don".

Mr. Benjamin: So have I. A very nice fellow.

Mr. Greenaway: He is a nice fellow. The letter of complaint was not that strong a letter but it went to his office and right through to Air Canada, as it should, for action to be taken. I think the proper action has been taken. There is a grievance and an appeal process. It is a sad day when citizens cannot complain about someone who is cranky or not giving good service in the civil service.

Mr. McKenzie: Swearing.