

Alleged Corruption in Government

The minister without portfolio says he has been treated unfairly. I heard him a while ago complain and mention that the press had been unfair to him. If he would simply remember how unfairly he treated the group which I represent in the province of Quebec, he would perhaps be more cautious today.

Anyhow, as long as it has not been proven that the minister is guilty, he must be given the benefit of the doubt. I grant him the benefit of the doubt with all the freedom I have, and an investigation will be made in his case. As a matter of fact, it has already started.

As for newspapermen being guilty of injustice toward the government, there are scandals which have been revealed in the country and which are not dealt with in the Dorion inquiry. For instance, there is the case of the department of immigration. The Prime Minister just announced transfers and changes of ministers from one post to another.

There should be for instance an inquiry made in the department of immigration in order to know why Hal Banks left Canada, with whose permission or through whose carelessness he went to the United States in order to escape charges brought against him in Canada.

The Rivard case is another question which comes under both the department of immigration and the Department of Justice. Why are such matters not debated here in the House of Commons, since they are not dealt with by the Dorion commission?

Will we have to set up 50 or 60 commissions in order to clearly establish what the government or certain ministers did in the administration of the affairs of the country and what responsibilities have been conferred upon them by this government?

Mr. Speaker, it is important that the Canadian people be given the opportunity to regain confidence in their parliamentary institutions. Today, because of all these rumours and what we read in the press, what we see on television and hear over the radio, the Canadian people are losing confidence in their parliamentary institutions, because instead of working for the common good some people are trying to further their own personal interests.

Mr. Speaker, it is for that reason and not because the Conservatives are right and the Liberals are wrong—the Conservatives themselves had scandals within their own organization when they were in power—and in the

[Mr. Caouette.]

interest of the most elementary justice, in the interest of the whole truth, that we are going to vote in favour of the motion for adjournment of the house in order that we may fully discuss the case of the various departments implicated in scandalous matters across the country.

[Text]

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Under the rules of the house we can, as I understand it, discuss only the urgency of debate and not the substance of the motion which is being made. I wish therefore to confine my remarks to the question of the urgency of debate.

I think there can be no doubt about the accuracy of the remark in this resolution that there is a great deal of public unease and concern about many of the facts which have come to light during the past two or three months and I would have thought the government itself might have welcomed an opportunity to make a statement to clear up some of the doubts which have been raised by recent events. I think the Minister of Justice could to very good purpose have used this or another opportunity to assure the house that prisoners are not moved from one part of Canada to the other at the request of parliamentary secretaries in order to please some person who is himself wanted in another country for very serious crimes; I would think the country generally would welcome some assurance from the Prime Minister that steps are being taken to make absolutely sure that the administration in the various departments, particularly in the Department of Justice and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, is being conducted on the basis of equal treatment for all and special privilege for none, and that any mistakes which have been made in recent times cannot recur, because of the fact that the government has taken the necessary steps to change the procedures which had previously been followed. As I say, I believe the government might have made such a statement. Such a statement would, in my view, be helpful and it may be that even now the Prime Minister is prepared to give some assurance to this house and to the country, because I can assure him that such an assurance is badly needed.

The position of this party is that if the government does not wish to make some statement we are not going to press it at the moment, for two reasons, first because we feel the Dorion inquiry ought to complete its work so that we may have some reliable information on which to operate. I can assure hon.