

Administration of Justice

There is one other thing I think I should say with regard to the file which I believe I omitted, and that is in respect of photographs. I have said that the aspects about the file which I have placed on the record I recall clearly. I do not recall any mention of photographs. If there were any I did not see them, nor was it suggested I should see them. I did not show any photographs to nor discuss photographs with any other person.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are left in the position where the government has decided to set up a judicial inquiry. The judicial inquiry, I suggest, will be left—unless the minister apologizes—to examine the truth or otherwise about the minister's allegation with regard to two or more privy councillors and Mrs. Munsinger. It will also examine the truth or otherwise of the minister's accusation that the case was mishandled by the then Prime Minister, and will establish the accuracy of all the other specifications in the charges made by the minister.

But no judicial inquiry can do anything to repair the damage that has been done to parliament this past week. An anxious and worried country wants to see, and is entitled to demand, that parliament get on with the pressing business of the country. To do so, we have to restore to this house an atmosphere of reason.

I dislike quoting myself, but two years ago when I spoke on the subject of "Getting Things Done In Parliament" I said this:

If parliament is to get things done, there is required, I believe, an atmosphere, a certain mental disposition on the part of parliamentarians and their leaders. This mental disposition will recognize that the institution will work only if there is mutual respect, and hardly at all if there is mutual contempt. The Canadian parliament has on occasion risen to great heights. Most of the time, despite the temptations and the frailties to which all humans and therefore all human institutions are subject, it has carried on the business of the country in a way that has done real credit to it and to Canada.

There will always be controversy in this house, sometimes heated controversy, and this is as it should be; but the ugly atmosphere which was created in this parliament last week must be purged if the effectiveness of the institution is to be restored. How is this to be done? The Minister of Justice has a great opportunity to act as the catalyst to restore such an atmosphere and to perform a service to the institution and the country. He can do so by resigning his office now.

[Mr. Fulton.]

In dealing with this question I am reminded of a statement by Walter Lippmann which I take the liberty of quoting:

"—though public officials are selected by the voters, or are appointed by men who are elected, they owe their primary allegiance not to the opinions of the voters but to the law, to the criteria of their professions, to the integrity of the arts and sciences in which they work, to their own conscientious and responsible convictions of their duty within the rules and the frame of reference they have sworn to respect."

● (3:30 p.m.)

In other words the primary duty of an office holder is to the office he holds. I cannot see how the Minister of Justice can claim to have any respect for the office he holds in view of what he has done to it.

So far, he has made a blanket accusation of immorality and of a possible breach of security against two or more former ministers whom he refuses to identify, thereby placing a whole group of hon. men and hon. members under the shadow of suspicion. He steadfastly refuses to identify the men he has in mind, or to substantiate his charges. In such an atmosphere parliament cannot work effectively, no matter how many judicial inquiries may be appointed.

For the good of parliament, and to enable this institution to get on with its work in an atmosphere that is cleansed of the bitterness of the past week, the minister should now prove his willingness to put his personal feelings aside and resign his office.

In resigning he can add to his own stature and restore some of the stature that parliament has lost as a result of his conduct; and at the same time—and I say this because I feel very deeply indeed about the position of responsibility of the Minister of Justice—the Prime Minister should dissociate himself and the government from the conduct that has taken place during the past week.

I suggest that if the minister will not resign the Prime Minister should dismiss him from the cabinet. If the Prime Minister cannot bring himself to do this then I suggest—Mr. Speaker, I think the inference of what I have to say is obvious, and in order not to do anything further to exacerbate opinions here I will leave it to the Prime Minister to get the message I am implying.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Hon. Guy Favreau (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, under the circumstances and in view of the days I spent in the