

*Supply*

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Speaker, I regret very much that the Opposition, on an issue which it brought to the House, refuses to allow members on the government side to be heard. It speaks of the message which I am trying to get across, and I think the Canadian people understand that very clearly.

**Mr. Penner:** Are they giving points for hypocrisy today?

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** I would have thought opposition Members might understand that there is sense in listening to debate. I disagree very strenuously with the Opposition positions that have been put forward. However, I displayed courtesy by listening to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) and to the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent). I did not spend my time sitting in the House caterwauling and trying to shout down their positions with which I disagree. That is something about which I might want to speak in the House of Commons, but Canadians do not want irresponsible opposition with Members standing and shouting down people who are trying to speak out in legitimate debates. I think Parliament has reached just such a crossroad. Over the course of the past few days the House has engaged—

**Mr. Keeper:** Why don't you speak to the issue?

**Mr. Kempling:** Why don't you shut your mouth, or I will come over and shut it for you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Did you hear that? Physical threats now.

**Mr. Marchi:** Civility!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Hon. Member is entitled to make his speech without interjections on either side, please.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Opposition has conducted this assault on the character and conduct of a Member of the House of Commons, a Member of the Ministry, without spelling out any specific charges—

**Mr. Broadbent:** Oh, come on!

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:**—without providing any evidence of a breach of the established Code of Conduct, without outlining any specific recommendations for improvements to that Code, without concern for the rules of the House or its committees, and without concern for the long-term implications its actions hold for that Member of this institution.

The motion which we are now debating today serves as a perfect example of those tactics. It condemns without showing cause. It provides no suggested course of action. It does not permit the House to vote and thus reach a conclusion. It furthers the objectives of those who seek to wound through innuendo.

If I may, I should like to take a few moments to expand on each of these themes. The history of Parliament is not one of a tepid debating society. Quite the contrary, this institution has

long been a place where the clash of passions, personalities, and ideas have led to vigorous debate and harsh criticism. There can be no doubt that this House, which was developed from the model of the Parliament at Westminster, has not had an entirely calm and passionless past. We all understand that the width of the centre aisle in the Mother of Parliaments was that of two sword lengths because at one time it prevented real bloodshed. Parliament has grown to be the central democratic institution of our nation by being the forum for the combat of the mind. It replaced the much less constructive forms of combat which preceded it. When we agree to join this combat, we must do so on the understanding that there are certain rules of conduct which govern it so that it is fair to all sides. Over the past hundreds of years these rules have been refined and improved upon to ensure that reasoned debate and argument takes place rather than open warfare, and that the Government of the day is properly held to account.

[*Translation*]

Many years ago, this House adopted the practice of refraining from attacks on the behaviour of a Member of this House without first establishing precise and detailed charges regarding the behaviour in question.

[*English*]

For two weeks now we have seen an anomalous situation develop where innuendo and supposition have formed the basis of just such an attack, yet no charge has been laid.

**Mr. Broadbent:** What were the innuendoes?

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** I think all Hon. Members would agree that there is value in adhering very closely to our practices, for it is this very body of practices which helps to keep this institution operating, particularly in times of stress.

I heard the Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party ask about innuendoes. During his remarks he indicated that there was absolutely no allegation of wrongdoing. He complained that somehow there was some type of appearance of wrongdoing, but he did not suggest that there was any wrongdoing on the part of the Hon. Minister. He is now telling me that he is carrying on in this debate without laying any specific charges of wrongdoing.

Democracy is often a fragile and delicate flowering of what is best in the nation from which it springs. However, no democratic people ever have but one view of what ought to be done. We must therefore develop the means to arrive at compromises between conflicting interests. If we begin to tear down those practices which make democracy possible, then we risk serious consequences.

If the House reflects upon the last two weeks and considers the consequences of destroying, or at least conveniently ignoring long established practices, I think many Members will conclude, as have I, that this is not the appropriate way to proceed.