

Television Statement by Member

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, when I rose yesterday to put the question I did to the Prime Minister I had one thought in mind; that was the code of ethics introduced in this house by the previous prime minister. Under that code of ethics no minister of the crown should be in a position where he may be threatened. Granted, we have had evidence in past parliaments and we have had evidence in this parliament where ministers of the crown in respect of furniture deals or videotape incidents have placed themselves in a position whereby external pressure might be exerted in order to bring about the result desired by anyone who is in on the know, and who is aware that what is being done should not be done; but when a member in this house says he is impugned, he is placing himself in a precarious position when he can be impugned by his own statements made during a broadcast, if anyone should want to refer to this broadcast and go through it.

Is it any wonder the image of this parliament is what it is when members continue to make reference to the wasted time of parliament? We see in the same transcript where another Liberal member referred to it as a very healthy parliament, and then said it should be abolished if it did not become efficient. Why don't they make up their own minds?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): One minute they say it is a healthy parliament; the next minute they say it should be more efficient. The efficiency of parliament is the responsibility of the Prime Minister. He does not contribute anything to this responsibility when he gets up and runs from the house.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder whether hon. members would not agree that we should not pursue this matter further. Certainly I do not wish to suggest that the debate should be interrupted in any way, but the hon. member did not follow up his question of privilege—and perhaps it is a good thing he did not—by a motion. Normally, there being no motion there can be no question of privilege; but in view of the fact that there was reference in his statement to the statement made yesterday by the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond I thought he should be permitted to say a few words, but I hoped he would not say anything that would cause the debate to continue too long.

[Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary).]

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, may I clarify one point. The hon. member for Okanagan Boundary charged deliberate distortion of his remarks. I should like to read from page 16 of the transcript provided through the C.B.C. If Liberal members are interested in this document I shall be happy to table it. I am quoting from page 16 to prove that there is no distortion of his words:

Howard: —You certainly have an opportunity to bring anything up in the house, but I have the opportunity as a government member, to put that minister on the spot in front of the Prime Minister who is sitting there saying—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): —who is sitting there saying “halt...”

Mr. Howard goes on to say:

Not as effectively... not as often as I can do it. I can do it every week. And the merest threat of doing it—

Then Mr. Howard goes on to say:

This doesn't matter. The merest threat of doing this is enough to get civil servants all down the line making sure that they get that job done that needs being done—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): It's too bad the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary did not finish the statement, because from the applause which took place it takes a government member to threaten the civil servants.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May I suggest to the hon. member that for the consideration of the Chair yesterday he read long excerpts from a statement made by the hon. member. The hon. member has again quoted from what was said on Tuesday in this exchange on television. The hon. member is now giving us a third edition of the same thing. I am wondering whether by this time we do not know enough about what was said on that program.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I will complete the quotation and throw his own words back to the hon. member. He said:

—because they know that if the minister is on the spot then they are going to be on the spot. And I have used this and it has worked.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): From the applause of Liberal members it appears that their idea of democracy is to threaten civil servants.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.