We all change hats and we all have people who work for us with different perspectives who then go on and do other things. I have many people in my department who support me very strongly in what I do. I do not believe they necessarily vote for me, but they are able to make a distinction between the demands of their jobs and their personal alliances. I believe that we should expect no less of Mr. Phillips.

Mr. Kaplan: I would be happy to take some time, if it was available, to show the difference in the relationship between John Grace and John Turner, on the one hand, who as far as I know, have had no political association, although they have been friends through life, and on the other hand the relationship between Bruce Phillips and his career and his relationship with the Prime Minister.

As far as I know, John Grace has never worked for John Turner. I do not even know if he is a member of the Liberal party.

Mr. Gauthier: He's not. He's a Tory.

Mr. Kaplan: I would probably know by now.

I am accused of character assassination and maybe the minister thinks I am the only person who feels this way about the appointment. If that is the way her mind is working, let me just take a moment to quote very briefly from an article by Frank Howard that appeared in the *The Ottawa Citizen*. The whole article is under the heading "Bruce Phillips unsuited for job". So it is not just Kaplan in the gutter here, who thinks this is a mistake. There is a national concern about the motion the minister has moved in the House today. The article stated:

> The person who is put forward as the candidate for the privacy job should look like—

• (1600)

We are talking about appearances here, not the character or integrity of the individual only, but appearances.

> —he or she could stand up to the government of the day, not like somebody who is being rewarded for loyalty to the PM.
>
> The bureaucracies of the two offices, privacy and access, need a standard bearer, not a spin-doctor.
>
> On the level of appearances mainly, his appointment will demoralize the post and perhaps the office. Morale may or may not suffer, but the high moral purpose of the office will be less obvious.

Surely the minister sees that.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I might just note that in addition to the fact that the personal friendship between John Grace and John Turner is totally irrelevant to the issue of Bruce Phillips' previous employment in the office of the Prime Minister, there is another issue and that is that the member for Vancouver—Quadra is not the custodian of government information. Quite clearly, one of the reasons that concern has been expressed about the appointment of Bruce Phillips is that the Privacy Commissioner is an advocacy role and on more than one occasion he will be in a position of having to challenge directly the office of the Prime Minister with respect to either policies of the office of the Prime Minister or with respect to particular practices of that office.

The fact that Mr. Phillips was an employee of the Prime Minister, whether or not objectively he is tainted in that way or not, in the eyes of the public the perception—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would hope the hon. member would comment on the speech of the hon. member for York Centre and ask him a question.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member for York Centre would comment upon my observation with respect to the ability of the Leader of the Official Opposition to disclose information under the Privacy Act.

While he is on his feet, the member for York Centre might as well want to clarify the current position because the Minister of Justice has not yet indicated what the current status is of both John Grace and Bruce Phillips. As I read the Privacy Act, and as I read the access to information legislation, the government does have the power, technically, to appoint these individuals for a term not exceeding six months even before Parliament has considered and adopted the resolution.

The hon. member for York Centre might want to comment on this and indicate whether, to the best of his knowledge, the government has gone ahead and ap-