

*Supply*

open government because they have abused every opportunity they have had to come clean with Canadians. They refused every opportunity to consult with Canadians. Yet today, in Opposition, suddenly things would be different if they had the chance again.

The Hon. Member says that it is a question of honesty, and indeed it is. I call upon him to ask his colleagues who sit in front of him whether they are being honest when they portray this masquerade that we see today after that systematic cover-up that we saw taking place for so many years.

**An Hon. Member:** We have heard your case.

**Mr. Beatty:** The Hon. Member, having raised the question of honesty, says not to mention honesty any more. We should not discuss it. I do not blame him. If our record had been as appalling as that of the Members opposite, I would not want to talk about honesty.

However, I do want to talk about honesty, and Members on this side want to talk about it for a very good reason. We are committed to opening the Government. We are committed to saying that Canadians have a positive right to get information according to access to information legislation. We are committed to directing public servants to give information freely, factually, and on the record.

Members opposite are saying that it should be given in secret and off the record. While they talk about openness, they say that when interviews take place in the future, they should take place in secret. That is the Liberal idea of what constitutes openness.

We want to open the doors and put it on the record. Let us not have secret discussions but open them to the news media.

These guidelines are also designed to protect public servants. The Revenue Canada episode in recent months showed that the Liberals were abusing the position of public servants and making them defend the discredited policies of the Liberal government. Many Members here will have seen *The Journal* earlier this year when that odious computer film was shown. It was paid for with \$200,000 of taxpayers' money. The Liberal Minister did not have the courage to defend the policy himself. He put his Deputy Minister on *The Journal* to defend it rather than defend the partisan actions of the government himself. That is an example of the abuse of the position of public servants.

Our Government differs from the discredited Liberals opposite by the fact that we believe it is the responsibility of public servants to give out factual information. When it comes to attacking or defending the record of the government, that is the role of the politicians, and it is a responsibility from which we do not shy.

When our task force finally arrived in Ottawa after traveling across the country, it was clear to everyone, including the Government, that Canadians acknowledged that there was a serious problem in the Department of National Revenue. Was there ever a willingness on the part of the members of the Treasury benches to acknowledge any culpability or default in

terms of their responsibility? Was there any feeling of remorse about what had been done to ordinary Canadians? Their response was to fire the Deputy Minister. The Minister remained in his job. This will not be done again by this Government for 12 years. My colleagues and I who were elected in 1972 have fought to restore the principle of ministerial responsibility. The Liberals were there to snip ribbons when new plants were being opened, Mr. Speaker. They were there to present cheques. But when there was a problem, was there any Liberal Minister who was prepared to say, "It was my responsibility as Minister. I stand behind my officials. I take the responsibility"? Those Members who were in the House during that period, do any of them remember hearing the Liberals say that?

● (1740)

**Mr. Taylor:** Never.

**Mr. Beatty:** Let me ask Members who were here during that time if they heard three words. What about the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) when he lost \$120 million of taxpayers' money on Consolidated Computer? We had questions raised in the House about that. We had leaked correspondence which the Minister would not table in the House and would not acknowledge—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Beatty:**—did anyone here hear the Hon. Member for Windsor West or any of his colleagues say these three words, "I was wrong"?

**Mr. Taylor:** No.

**Mr. Beatty:** In 12 years I cannot recall an occasion when a Liberal member rose in his place and admitted that a mistake had been made. Yet the Liberals talk about openness. Blame would be shifted to the Public Service; blame would be shifted to the Americans if the economy turned sour; blame would be shifted to the Opposition; blame would be shifted to the Parti Québécois or to the provinces. It was a policy of blame anyone else, but take the credit when things go right. Blame belongs to somebody else. If the polls started to slide—the Liberals loved polls—you would hear them say, "Don't worry. The taxpayers will fork out several million dollars more for new advertising campaigns". The Canada geese were scrambled and put on display. If there had been an honest portrayal of the Canada geese, they would have been shown flying south like everyone else during that period.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Beatty:** The geese have flown south and the chickens have come home to roost.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!