

of the admission of his own lawyer, Jean-Claude Hébert, that he looked at the evidence and it was overwhelming, and he suggested that he plead guilty.

I emphasize that the Member for Chambly pleaded guilty. This is important because in law this is clearly an admission of his wrongdoing. It is an admission that he took bribes. It is an admission that he defrauded this House and abused his office as a Member of Parliament. In light of those admissions, the suggestion made yesterday by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lewis) is ludicrous.

Of course, it is not up to the Minister of Justice, as Your Honour well knows, to decide what action this House may ultimately take. For the Minister of Justice to suggest that we wait for 30 days to see if an appeal will be launched is, with great respect, totally unfounded. The only possible appeal would be an appeal from the sentence by either the person convicted or the Crown. The Crown has announced that it will not appeal the sentence so the only person who could appeal the sentence is the Hon. Member for Chambly himself. No matter what sentence is ultimately handed down, the fact remains that he has admitted to the wrongdoing that was the basis for that sentence.

Some may say that he could always have a change of heart and change his plea, ask to appear before the court, saying that he really was not guilty and had made a terrible mistake. I am sure that the Minister of Justice knows that the circumstances under which such a plea are allowed would effectively rule out any serious consideration of that in this case.

The reality is that the Member made that plea through his lawyer. His lawyer has said that the evidence was overwhelming and that in the face of that evidence there was no alternative. I suggest that it is ludicrous to ask the House to wait 30 days, as the Minister of Justice has suggested, before we take action. It is an abdication of the responsibility of the Government to do so.

There are not an awful lot of precedents in this area. Your Honour is aware that in 1947 the then Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, rose in his place and moved a motion to expel Fred Rose who had been adjudged guilty of certain indictable offences. As he said, "the resolution speaks for itself". He said: "I have nothing to add".

*Privilege—Mr. Robinson*

• (1120)

I want to point out that it is particularly important that Your Honour allow the motion of which I intend to give notice to be put before the House in light of the circumstances of these offences and, if I may say, in light of some of the comments that have been made since the conviction, since the guilty plea, by Conservative Members of this House.

The message that Canadians are hearing is a mixed message. We as parliamentarians have an obligation, each of us, to uphold the privileges of this House. We are being watched by Canadians to ensure that those privileges are protected. Members on the government side of the House make statements, as did the Hon. Member for Beauce, suggesting that the fraud and breach of trust activities are anomalies and that they in no way detract from the qualities of the Member as a Member of Parliament. The Hon. Member for Montreal—Duvernay has said that we are being too harsh on the Member for Chambly, that the courts are imposing a double standard and that is tougher for elected officials.

He has indicated that it is becoming very nerve-racking, that we are all human, that all sorts of things can happen when one is an MP, and that an ordinary citizen does not have the same problem. An ordinary citizen probably would not get a day in jail for this kind of offence, I would note. He says that they do not have to face the music all the time like we do, that we are always in the spotlight, but that for ordinary people it never shows.

Those are extraordinary statements by Conservative Members of Parliament defending the conduct of one of their colleagues who was found guilty of breach of trust, of fraud, and who has admitted to that wrongdoing. Where do we go from here? The Crown prosecutor, when he was asked if justice had been served by a one-day sentence, said, and I quote: "That is up to Parliament. They are the ones who will decide if he can continue as an MP".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Chambly (Mr. Grisé) was a Member of some importance during the last Parliament. He was Chairman of the Regional Development Committee, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and chaired the Québec caucus of his Party.