

Morality in Government

Here I should like to share with the house a couple of quotations from speeches by Right Hon. Harold Macmillan. The first will be found in the Parliamentary Debates 1962-63, volume 667, dated November 14, 1962. I do not think I need draw the attention of the house to what issue was before the House of Commons on that occasion. He said:

I repeat that none of us who has had any long experience of the ordinary thrusts, however wounding, of political life pays much attention to them. We try to control our temper and take as easily as we can the ups and downs. If one were to answer every falsehood that is put about, one would spend one's whole time in repudiation. Many things are best put aside and many criticisms find their own level.

Again, on page 401 he goes on:

I have a feeling that the time has come for men of propriety and decency not to tolerate the growth of what I can only call the spirit of Titus Oates and Senator McCarthy. At any rate, let the judgment be made. If these men are guilty of what it is said they are guilty of, in the old days their heads would have fallen on Tower Hill and today they would never dare lift up their heads among their comrades again. If those who accuse them have done so falsely out of wantonness or malice, let them receive, in due course, not only those who come in the front line, but those who stand behind them, the reprobation which they will have deserved.

The second quotation is from a speech by the same right hon. gentleman on May 7, 1963, and is found on page 250, volume 677:

As for men in public life—and here we are all in the same boat—I do not think that they must be too sensitive. They must expect, whether by the reporter's words or the cartoonist's pencil, to suffer some wounding blows. This is part of what we assume when we voluntarily enter upon public affairs.

● (4:40 p.m.)

It is in this context, Mr. Speaker, that I deplore what we have been about. Because I am one who believes that talk should be followed by some action, I propose, seconded by the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale), amending the motion that is before Your Honour as follows:

That all the words after "that" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"this house strongly deplores and condemns this government's actions in having the R.C.M. Police provide information to the government as to the past conduct of all members of parliament generally, a course of action which would destroy the independence of all members and undermine the institution of parliament."

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Hon. members have heard the amendment moved by the hon. member for Royal. If there is no objection to this amendment I shall proceed to read it.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, there is a procedural point of some importance which I believe arises out of the ruling made by His Honour a few moments ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: May I interrupt the minister? When the minister rose to speak I was going to add that I would read this amendment from the chair subject to the ruling made by Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the minister would wish to continue now.

Mr. MacEachen: I am not sure whether I should proceed to make the point of order now or following the reading of the amendment, but I do wish to present a point of order, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the terms of the amendment. I make the submission that the terms of the amendment are not in conformity with the ruling made a moment ago by His Honour.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Then I shall proceed to read the amendment moved by the hon. member for Royal again, subject to the limitations contained in the ruling made by Mr. Speaker. Moved by Mr. Fairweather, seconded by Mr. Dinsdale:

That all the words after "that" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"this house strongly deplores and condemns this government's actions in having the R.C.M. Police provide information to the government as to the past conduct of all members of parliament generally, a course of action which would destroy the independence of all members and undermine the institution of parliament."

The Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the ruling made by His Honour was based on a ruling previously made by Mr. Speaker Macdonald.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker Michener.

Mr. Pickersgill: No, Mr. Speaker Macdonald.

Mr. MacEachen: I understand that this ruling is reported in *Hansard* for March 21, 1950, at page 949. I understand that Mr. Speaker Macdonald was ruling on precisely the kind of discussion that could take place in the House of Commons with respect to a matter which was at that time before a royal commission. It has been suggested by hon. members opposite that the inquiry we are discussing is a royal commission. At that time Mr. Speaker Macdonald ruled, as I recollect the quotation, that it was possible to deal with collateral matters relating to a royal