

*Supply*

network and access to Government by those who are the old, trusted and true friends of the Government in office, and that the actions of the Government are not necessarily conducted within the principles established for the maintenance of the highest level of confidence possible in the Parliament of Canada; that the Government might reconsider the position it took earlier this morning, the position in which it finds itself with regard to today's vote.

I do not think anyone in the House believes that the current guidelines are adequate. Even the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has indicated that he is considering a review. I do not think anyone in the public sector believes that even if they are adequate, they are being followed rigorously enough. I do not think anyone in the House or outside the House believes that the guidelines have sufficient teeth in them for enforcement purposes. I do not believe that anyone in the public, or in the House of Commons for that matter, believes that the final decision rests with the conscience of the person who happens to have had his or her actions questioned.

• (1150)

If we do not believe those things, and I think that fair-minded people all across the country will agree with me that it is not unreasonable to not believe those things, there can be no time like the present for a break with the past. In order to achieve that confidence that we all think is so absolutely necessary, in order to elevate the level of the House of Commons in the minds of the public of Canada and raise the public opinion of Parliament now and in the future, I suggest that the Government allow this matter to be sent to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, not to review and rehash old battles—

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

**Mr. Deans:** I find Cabinet Ministers and their supporters snickering. It is interesting how they can disregard all of the vital and genuine concerns because they are afraid to face the actions of the past. I can assure them on behalf of this Party that there will be no rehashing. We are talking about looking at guidelines that will prove to be sustaining, prove to be adequate, which will provide the protection so necessary for the people who work for the public of Canada, and at the same time provide for the protection of the public of Canada from actions taken by those in authority which may, and I suspect probably could be, interpreted to have been actions that may in the future be inappropriate actions.

It is not the preserve of this or any other Prime Minister to set guidelines. It is not the preserve of the Government of the day to set out guidelines that it happens to feel suits its particular mould or bent. It is to preserve of Parliament to establish guidelines that protect all of us from the actions of one or more of us. Every single Member of Parliament is drawn into disrepute when one Member is drawn into disrepute. The

public attitude toward Parliament is diminished and undermined when a Member does something, or is perceived to have done something, that is considered to be an inappropriate act.

It is our collective responsibility to write and to institute guidelines for politicians and for senior public servants. It cannot be done in the House of Commons because it is too large and too difficult, it would be impossible. However, it can, should and must be done in a committee. For that reason we in this Party believe that this action taken by the Official Opposition is an action long overdue.

**Mr. Nielsen:** It is their motion.

**Mr. Deans:** As the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Nielsen) says, it is entirely consistent, word for word, with a motion put down by a Cabinet Minister in 1974 and approved by Parliament. It is an action that is consistent with elevating the status of Parliament to a level that it should enjoy but has not enjoyed for some time. It is an action that would relieve the Government of the responsibility of passing judgment upon itself and its colleagues. It is an action that would make it unnecessary for the Prime Minister of a Liberal, Conservative or NDP Government to rise to defend Cabinet Ministers on occasions when their actions are being questioned. It is an action that would make the House of Commons responsible to Members, to the public, and would give the public some confidence in the future.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The rules of the House provide for a period of questions and answers at this point. Are there any Members rising to ask questions?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Hon. Member who just finished speaking. What struck me in his comments was his obvious concern for preserving this parliamentary institution and his desire to find ways of increasing the confidence of Canadians in their elected representatives and their confidence in our parliamentary institutions. In this respect, I think he is entirely correct, and I wish to congratulate him on his remarks which were, in a way, quite different from the initial comments made by the Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition, the Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), who made a number of gratuitous remarks without really getting to the bottom of the problem, which is the confidence of Canadians in people who are in public life.

I would like to ask the Hon. Member how he intends to increase the confidence of the public in our parliamentary institutions, when Members of this House so often abuse their parliamentary immunity. Should we not look for new ways of preventing members from taking such undue advantage? Very often, unwarranted and unfounded accusations are made in the House by Members who lack the mental courage to repeat them outside this House and use Parliament and their parliamentary immunity to tarnish reputations by spouting half-truths and falsehoods. I wonder whether the Hon. Member has any suggestions for rules that might be established to change