

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member was recognized to add to a question of privilege. Is the Hon. Member directing a criticism at the Chair or is it—

Mr. Nielsen: He is just informing the Chair he is sick.

Mr. McKenzie: We knew that.

Mr. Speaker: Are there any other Hon. Members seeking to intervene at this point?

Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I wish to intervene with respect to the question of privilege raised by the Opposition House Leader yesterday. I had expected to hear, for a moment at least, some views from the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain.

Mr. Deans: What is the point?

Mr. Crombie: I do not want to go over the ground covered by my House Leader, but I want to add a dimension which I think is important to the matter you have to deal with. It arises from the debate yesterday in Question Period, and I might add, now that I have heard the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) speak on the matter, that the thoughts I have for you as you make your decision are perhaps more in order than I even thought myself.

It seems to me that the root of our difficulty, not only on the matter specifically before you but those which have arisen in the last number of months, Mr. Speaker, relates to our understanding of what the Prime Minister's Office is, what it does, its relationships with Government and with us. I heard the Deputy Prime Minister the other day, Mr. Speaker, simply say there was no basic difference between public funds in a Member's office or in the office of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney), and public funds being used in the Prime Minister's Office. That suggestion is sustained in an article in *The Globe and Mail* today where the principal secretary to the Prime Minister again tries to draw an analogy by saying that the Leader of the Opposition has public funds for research, as does every Member, as well as the PMO.

When I heard the Prime Minister himself say that he saw his "exempt staff" as not being governed by the same rules of conduct as members of the Public Service, I say to you that I hope I will have your attention on this matter because I have not heard anything which has quite so disturbed me in a long, long time. The Prime Minister is absolutely wrong. The danger of his assumption is quite stunning. The Prime Minister's Office stands in an entirely different constitutional position from that of a Member's office or the office of the Leader of the Opposition, indeed almost any other office you can think of.

In 1979 an excellent book was written called *The Super Bureaucrats*. That book is an exposition of the central agencies of Government. Central to that was its discussion of the Prime Minister's Office. This is the shortest definition you will find of what the Prime Minister's Office does. I commend it to you, Mr. Speaker, because it is very important. It states that the

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Prime Minister's Office is to serve the Prime Minister in the exercise of his power, in the pursuit of his duties, and in the discharge of his responsibilities as head of Government and as head of the administration.

• (1510)

That is the job of the Prime Minister's Office. It advises the Prime Minister as head of the Government and head of the administration. That is the qualitative, fundamentally important difference, Mr. Speaker, between the Prime Minister's Office and the Leader of the Opposition's office, or indeed any other research office. The fundamental difference is that when the Prime Minister's Office speaks, asks a question, writes a letter, asks people to investigate or telephones, the Prime Minister's Office is speaking with the authority and power of the Government and the state.

Today the Prime Minister said something which I never thought I would hear in the House. He said that when the exempt staff in his office operates they are not part of the Government and controlled by the mode of conduct required for all public servants. If there was any doubt about the power of the Prime Minister's Office, it has surely increased in the past 15 years. We have centralized more and more power in the office of the Prime Minister. That is why there has been grave concern.

When the Prime Minister spoke about research of a political nature, he totally confused the role of his Party with his job as head of the Government. It gives me concern, Mr. Speaker, and should give you concern when you make your decision.

I would like to quote from an article about a topic which was recently debated in a city in this country. It reads as follows:

The growth of central agencies (notably the Prime Minister's office . . .) has had a dramatic effect on the role of the Liberal Party in Government. The development of powerful resources around the leader has meant that many functions that are "political"—and political in a partisan sense—have devolved to publicly-paid officials. Much of what might otherwise have been the party's role has been subsumed . . . by the developments.

In light of this, it has become progressively easier for the party to slip into the role of simply an election machine, cranked up every four years, but largely dormant and ineffective in inter-election periods. Even in elections, much of the planning and related activity that one might expect to see reside in the realm of the party has become centered in government or parliamentary institutions, reliant on government or parliamentary resources.

I did not make that up, Mr. Speaker. That is from a discussion paper on the reform of the Liberal Party. That is a report from the Committee for Reform of the Liberal Party in Canada. It is under the auspices of the president of the Liberal Party.

There is danger in confusing the activities of those who work in the Prime Minister's Office with those who work in the Leader of the Official Opposition's office or members' offices. It is a matter which is important to us and also to the Liberal Party; at least, their own people who want to reform them say so. It has occupied the minds of people in other countries. How do you control the power of the Prime Minister's Office in relation to the privileges of the House and the privileges of the Members in it? The question is what power the Government,