

Privilege—Mr. Blenkarn

Member of Parliament is a minister of the Crown—space and facilities in this House of Commons, and Parliament. However, that is not what happened. You may have made arrangements for the use of Room 200 by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) or a member of his staff; but neither the President of the Treasury Board nor his parliamentary secretary—or even a Member of Parliament—were in charge of that room. The only employees of the House of Commons present were the constables who look after the general security of that building. The people who denied me and my colleagues access to Room 200 were public servants who worked for a ministry and who have their offices elsewhere than in this House. The problem is that this minister and this government, in denying access to Parliament, are guilty of the same kind of thing as happened under the reign of Charles II.

● (1620)

Members of Parliament have been denied access to the facilities of Parliament by officers of the Crown. That goes to the fundamental principle of how the House of Commons, Parliament itself, is supposed to operate. The essence of the battle is that Parliament is a separate place; it is not part of the government. The government is a different thing than Parliament. Members of cabinet are often members of this House of Commons or members of the other place but that does not entitle them, other than in the course of their duties as members or as ministers of the Crown, to allow their public servants who run the departments of government to decide what Members of Parliament can or cannot do in the House of Commons. That is essentially what happened yesterday.

Without wasting the time of the House, Madam Speaker, or being accused of conducting a filibuster, I want to say that the essence of what happened yesterday is that Members of Parliament were denied access, and their privilege was interfered with, not by any Member of Parliament or an officer of Parliament who had assigned a particular room to a member of Parliament on your instructions through your service, but by officers of a ministry. That is wrong. That is a breach of the privileges of a Member of Parliament. On that basis, Madam Speaker, I would ask you to find that this matter should be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Madam Speaker: I think I can deal rather quickly with this question of privilege. I would say to the hon. member that whenever he asks me to let him have a room in which to conduct a meeting, to hold a reception or for whatever other reason the rooms in the House of Commons are used by members, he would be perfectly authorized to stop someone at the door in order to avoid having some people crash his party or attend a meeting to which they were not invited. I would have to assume that that person was there under his authority, even if that person was not a Member of Parliament. In the same way I would say that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) who asked me for a room and was given access to it, which is normal for any members of the House of

Commons, would have the right to determine to whom to give access to whatever business he was conducting in that room.

If, under the guise of that question of privilege, the hon. member—I would not say he wishes to make me decide whether or not a room of the House of Commons was used—is saying that I would have to rule on who should be invited to the lock-up, I am afraid I have to tell him that that is totally outside my purview.

I can therefore deal quite quickly with this question of privilege. I do not think there is one.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

MAIN ESTIMATES, 1981-82

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting estimates with regard to sums required for the Public Service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1982, was presented by hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board) and read by Madam Speaker to the House.

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I am certain that my colleagues will allow me to introduce the following motion relating to the tabling of the main estimates.

[*English*]

REFERENCE OF ESTIMATES TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I move, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 59, that the Main Estimates 1981-82 tabled this day be referred to the several standing committees of the House as follows. Because the list is rather long and there is a detailed allocation of the estimates to the committees, if it is agreeable to the House, I ask the list be printed in *Hansard* as if it had been read.

[*Editor's Note: The list referred to is as follows:*]

That the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1982, Tabled on Wednesday, February 25, 1981, be referred to the several Standing Committees of the House as follows:

To the Standing Committee on Agriculture

Agriculture Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50

To the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture

Communications Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, L25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90 and 95

Secretary of State Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30

To the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence

External Affairs Votes 1, 5, 10, L15, L20, 25, 30, 35, L40, L45, L50, L55, L60, 65 and 70

National Defence Votes 1, 5, 10 and 15

To the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs