

Privilege—Mr. Coates

use and the appearance of the highest possible use, to the best interests and motivations of the premises.

Therefore, I could indicate to the hon. members who have participated in this discussion that while I do not see myself now—or at any time that I give my permission to any hon. member or group of hon. members to use these buildings—in a position to insist upon certain arrangements in their agendas, I certainly see myself in a position to encourage as much as possible the best possible use of the buildings in every sense and the appearance of that, and perhaps therefore I will take the matter under advisement and see what might be done in this regard.

● (1530)

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggan): Mr. Speaker, I have been standing for some time in anticipation of being recognized. I realize that Your Honour is taking the whole matter under advisement, but while you are doing that may I be permitted to make a couple of remarks that I think are germane to your consideration of the matter.

The hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North (Mr. Coates) has put forward his point very well to the effect that you are in fact the person who had a direct involvement in the use of the parliament buildings and, I suggest, the grounds that surround the parliament buildings. But I think there is another consideration and, I suggest with the greatest respect, you should take it under advisement. That is the fact that we in the House are only one part of parliament. After all, Sir, you as the Speaker of the House who are seized with the responsibility of judging matters of privilege with respect to every member are also a person who must in fact give consideration to the protection of the rights of parliament. As you know, Mr. Speaker, parliament consists of three parts, the Crown, the Senate and the House of Commons. What I am suggesting to you is that there is a fundamental question in the use of the grounds and of the parliament buildings as a backdrop for national television during this week and particularly on July 1st. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Mr. Guilbault) suggests that the government has no control over an independent body which is organizing celebration on July 1st. Yet, if that independent body, whoever they are, did not have \$3.5 million to use for this function, we would not have the backdrop, we would not have jets of the Department of National Defence planes flying over or a fly past of Jet Stars, whatever, and we would not have any celebration at all. So the point that the parliamentary secretary makes that there is no involvement by the government is a facetious point.

Secondly, I say that a double standard is developing here with respect to the operation of Canada Week and July 1st by this government of which I think you should be aware, Mr. Speaker. In the province of Quebec we witnessed the spectacle this weekend of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Chrétien) participating at the celebrations there on behalf of the government. So far as the government is concerned it was quite satisfactory for representatives of the

[Mr. Speaker.]

opposition party in Quebec, which I believe is the Liberal party, to be invited to participate, but when it comes to the national day in the capital of Canada, no provision is made for representatives from both sides of the House of Commons to participate.

I tell you, Sir, that this is not a matter which we take lightly. I know that in my own province in western Canada people are terribly concerned about the fact that there is no place in this participatory program for the Governor General. After all, he, not the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), is the representative of the head of state. The fact is that the Prime Minister has been received as head of state in foreign countries, that he has developed a large bureaucracy around him and that, in answers to the right hon. gentleman in his own words, he holds himself out as leader of this country. This implies that he considers himself to be leader of our country rather than the Governor General, and this is something that you, Mr. Speaker will have to consider. Unlike the situation in the United States we have a separation between our political leader and our head of state. Our Governor General is non-partisan, and we have a Prime Minister who is a partisan, political figure. Whether we like it or not, when someone speaks on behalf of all Canadians, it should be the representative of the head of state, the Governor General. Until that is changed, the use of parliament buildings, with the large flag flying over our building, with the expensive stage out in front, with the use of Department of National Defence planes and large expenditures of money, should be considered by you, I suggest with all respect, to be indirectly a challenge to the rights and privileges of every member of the House of Commons.

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege arising from a question which I raised in the question period. I caught Your Honour's eye to ask a question in which I was seeking information. On April 25 of this year I put a number of questions to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Danson) concerning the fact that he was allowing members of parliament to put constituency offices on national defence bases, something which has never been allowed here before. We have not been allowed on national defence bases before unless invited by a resident. There has been a great change in policy on this matter. Today I sought information on this matter because this time honoured policy had been changed and I wanted to confirm when and at what time it had been changed. I feel that my privileges have been—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Surely the hon. member knows very well that if he wishes to differ, as he is attempting to do, with the decision I made in respect of the handling of a question during the question period, it is a decision I have taken which is not subject to appeal. Secondly, this matter would never amount to a question of privilege, and thirdly, if the hon. member wishes to seek information, it is a valid objective during the question period. However, he must realize that the form in which he put his question today was clearly objectionable on the grounds of being argumentative. It was seriously argumentative.