

Privilege—Mr. Nystrom

The Conservative party does not need to eat at the public trough to have a study done with a partisan slant. They are backed by all the Bay Street boys. They charge 125 bucks a throw for a dinner.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rodriguez: They do not need to eat at the public trough to get these particular studies done. Indeed, they may well have prejudiced beneficial results for the people of Canada and Parliament by having cast the task force in such a manner as to have only three members.

In this corner of the House we are always prepared to accept good proposals and to look at good, concrete results from any task force, and, of course, we are always willing to participate. We were denied the opportunity as parliamentarians to participate in the discussions and in the final recommendations, whether or not it was a majority or minority position.

The fact is that the people of Canada have to pay for something which has now become—and I believe it is not out of order to say it—a partisan report. I know and we all know that the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) was very upset that he did not get a cabinet post—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We are not necessarily on totally firm ground in terms of a question of privilege to start with. I do not think we should stretch our luck any more than we have already.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I would not want to do that, but in conclusion—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rodriguez: I can see I have some approval over there so maybe I will make one or two more points. We are all concerned about restraint in government. We are all concerned about the spending of taxpayers' money. The people of Canada were expecting a different kind of performance, and in fact the appointment of this task force—it was a cozy little reward—to do this kind of a study does not do anything to bolster the confidence of Canadians that what we do here in the House of Commons will have some benefit for them as the people of this country.

One last point that I want to make on this question of privilege that has been raised by the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville concerns the whole question of other parties having their committees go around the country to do studies. Does that mean that we will be able to apply to the government for funds by telling them that we have a committee studying occupational health and safety in Canada, and that we would like the same kinds of fund flow so we can go out and do a similar study? Where does it stop? The answer is that you cannot encourage that sort of junketing across the country. If the House of Commons wants to investigate a serious matter, it ought to be done in the way we have established in the past, and that is by having members from all sides of the

[Mr. Rodriguez.]

House participating. If members who are sitting on the committee do not agree with some of the ideas expressed, they have the opportunity to submit a minority report for the consideration of all members of the House.

As I said, I think what has happened here is unfortunate. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that you would rule that the government cannot appoint members from its back benches exclusively to look at any particular problem in this country, paid for by the taxpayers of Canada which does not reflect the adversary nature of the House of Commons. That is what this place is all about. It is an adversary system. It is like the legal system and the labour scene in this country. That task force paid for by the taxpayers of Canada does not reflect the nature of the House of Commons or the 36 per cent support that the Prime Minister got to win government in this country. The Prime Minister is acting as if he had a majority government and as if he had all the members of the House of Commons. I think that is arrogance that can only be equalled by his predecessor.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I had indicated that I wanted to conclude the discussion and I have concluded the discussion. I do not need to hear any more—

Mr. Olivier: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

[Translation]

Mr. Olivier: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Olivier: I wonder why I cannot have the floor, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have indicated that I wanted—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

[Translation]

Order. The hon. member understands, I am sure, that it is impossible for the Speaker and the hon. member to speak both at the same time. Order.

[English]

I have asked for the co-operation of the House in the discussion of this matter. I have indicated that it already remains under reserve with the Minister of Agriculture and the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, who raised another point similar to this. I had indicated to members earlier that I had asked them not to be repetitious. I have had a rather full discussion of this matter, as I have had on the point raised by the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. The matter will not be decided today. It remains to be held over until the Minister of Agriculture and the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell are here on Monday. I