

tance in our country. The parliamentary secretary may have forgotten, but on that particular day we will celebrate the birth of a nation. It was a birth which had some difficulties, but in 1867 it was supported by all parties and by all elements generally in the legislatures.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Over the years the nation has had some rather tough times. Some of those rough times came about because governments did not care. I am not necessarily talking about this government, but governments have sometimes forgotten the importance of certain symbols and minorities. They have been just a little neglectful, and as suggested by my colleague, who spoke with much eloquence with respect to July 1, 1977, this matter should not be allowed to continue in this way.

If none of the leaders of the federalist parties in this House—except of course, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)—are allowed to participate officially in the festivities of that day on Parliament Hill in front of the building which is supposed to signify in some way our sense of national unity, then with respect to the institution of confederation this government will not only neglect that institution but also harm it. I hope you, Mr. Speaker, as the first commoner, will not allow that to happen.

Last year I asked a question of the then secretary of state, who is now the Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Faulkner), whether it was the intention of the government to provide \$200,000 to assist in the promotion of a program celebrating Canada's birthday in 1976. I was told by the minister—in fact, I was jeered by him—that I must remember that the restraint program was in operation. This year when the corpse which was supposed to be dead, namely separatism, has announced that it is alive and kicking in one part of the country, it is interesting that this government should not spend merely \$200,000 on an important event but that it is prepared to spend in excess of \$3 million on an important event because the circumstances are different.

Circumstances certainly are different. Canada is facing a problem now, and its solution will depend on good will in this chamber and in every part of this country. If this kind of insipient partisanship which seems to have developed over this holiday—and I am using the real sense of the holiday; it is not just a day off—is allowed to happen, Canadians will be given a one-sided view of our interest as parliamentarians in celebrating that day. That is why I admire the hon. member who raised this question of privilege. It is important that we understand that no matter where we sit in this House of Commons, whether it is to Your Honour's right, to your left, or where you sit, it will be an important day not just for the Prime Minister, for the government of the day or for the Liberal Party; it will be important for all Canadians and all their representatives.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Privilege—Mr. Coates

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I cannot believe, Sir, that it is beyond the imagination of yourself, of hon. members of this House or of a representative group to decide the best way in which this parliament as a whole—without regard to parties in the partisan sense but with regard to parties in the sense that we represent all Canadians who sent us here—should celebrate. Particularly the leaders of all the parties—and a representative of one party because of an unfortunate circumstance last weekend—should be allowed to participate openly in the celebrations on this bill for Canada's birthday.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have some serious difficulties with the fundamental aspects of questions of privilege as they involve any kinds of celebrations taking place anywhere in the country and certainly the role of the Speaker in attempting to decide the agenda of any event anywhere. However, there is an aspect of this question which does fascinate me, and that is not so much the arrangements about the expenditure of funds or the arrangements made by the government of the day. What interests me from the point of view of the privileges of all hon. members is the setting for these celebrations on July 1 being the House of Commons itself. Were they in the building, it would of course be clear that they would be subject to considerable jurisdiction on my part. As they will be located outside the building, that raises some more interesting questions of precise and exact jurisdiction.

In any case, I think all hon. members would probably realize that it is most doubtful that my jurisdiction in this matter would extend or would be expected to extend to the precise agenda or to the individual arrangements whether it be on a question of protocol or otherwise. That would be very difficult to expect each time I am asked to extend to hon. members of any party the use of these rooms and these buildings which, as I think all hon. members know, is a matter to which I have directed my attention several times in the past.

I have attempted to develop a policy that whenever these premises are used by hon. members to receive Canadian people who are taxpayers or visitors, there ought to be some parliamentary connection. We have attempted to do some things which would on the one hand encourage that activity to take place, because it is at the very root of our democratic system. However, on the other hand we must see to it that this does not become a commercial establishment and that events are not held here when they ought to be held in commercial premises. Therefore, what I am attempting to do is to exert some influence over the content of what takes place on these premises and to bear in mind that when the buildings of parliament are being used the activities should have a parliamentary flavour and a parliamentary purpose. Even if that were the motivation, which I feel all hon. members endorse, it would not be expected that I would want to inquire on every occasion into the full details of the agenda and of the arrangements, but I think it ought to be expected that since the parliament buildings are being used, I, on behalf of all members of parliament, ought to attempt to encourage the highest possible