

public servants, I want to assure him that they are taken into consideration and that I will convey his message to the minister responsible.

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THE CONSTITUTION

TABLING OF PETITION FROM STUDENTS SUPPORTING PATRIATION OF AMENDED CONSTITUTION

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House had laid on the Table the fifth report of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petition presented by the hon. member for Laval (Mr. Roy) and finds that it meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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[English]

PRIVILEGE

MR. NOWLAN—SECURITY MEASURES ON PARLIAMENT HILL

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Madam Speaker, I have a question of privilege. Ordinarily, I would have written a letter to try to have something clarified; but in view of the totality of what happened this morning, which is the first time something like this has happened in the years that I have been in the House of Commons, I think that for the benefit of all hon. members it should be clarified post haste because the same thing almost happened again at noon.

I am very sorry that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is not here, and it is unfortunate; however, I am sure he will hear about this. Quite frankly, I am not imputing this to the Prime Minister, but I am suggesting that perhaps there is an element of pomp, circumstance or presidential, or whether there is bona fide security involved—and that is what I want to know. We all know there has to be increased security in this day of the looney when unfortunate things happen.

However, very briefly, my point of privilege is that I understood that the door to the west was known as the members' door, and that members habitually, traditionally and historically have been driven up to it. Ministers who are members get out and come in, in the same manner as a member. I have noticed, in the last week or so, that at certain times there seem to be six or eight plainclothes people and uniformed commissioners and RCMP waving off cars at the members' door. Then when one looks behind in the rear view mirror, one sees the prime ministerial entourage coming. So I can understand that to a point.

This morning I drove up and, unfortunately, I was a little late; it was about five after nine, but quite often I happen to come in either just before or after the Prime Minister's entourage. I came up, saw six or eight individuals waving off the area where the bus parks. I said to my wife, "Well, I think the Prime Minister must be around." I looked in the rear view

Privilege—Mr. Nowlan

mirror and the prime ministerial cars were down by the East Block; but I did not go into the area which is restricted to buses and/or where cabinet members and others are sometimes let off. I stopped by the sidewalk and the light post where the little lady used to stand with the lonely little flag. I then got out of the car, at which time the prime ministerial entourage was approximately by the Senate door. It took about five seconds. I walked in without any problem.

Ten minutes later I received a very even-voiced call from my wife who, after she discharged me, had continued on her way. In front of the National Cenotaph, after a blinking light from an RCMP car had followed her off the grounds, she was apprehended, pulled over to stop, and was asked why she stopped in front of a restricted area. She did say that the constable who stopped her was most polite. My wife answered, "I have let my husband off to go to work." He asked: "What does he do?" She said, "He is a Member of Parliament." So the constable said, "Oh, would you please have him get off at the sidewalk when the prime ministerial entourage is arriving?"

● (1510)

As I say, I am not imputing this to the Prime Minister but I am very irritated. This is a members' door, not a prime ministerial door. I have made inquiries and quite frankly, Madam Speaker, I have found that there has been no new directive for security inside the House or outside the House. Perhaps your inquiries will prove me wrong but that is what I understood.

I understand the need for security, and in view of the coming summit conference perhaps there will have to be more security. If it is security, Madam Speaker, we cannot have it both ways and have the public lined up at the sidewalk, quite properly to see our Prime Minister from time to time, and not have members of Parliament drive up and be let off at the members' door. There is the back door where the Prime Minister or members may come in, or there is the side door which is now open and which is a lot more secure, perhaps, than the public door.

I should like your Honour to take this matter under advisement to find out if it was just an overzealous act of an officer or if there has been a change of direction and instruction and, if so, who has given the instruction. Then perhaps the embarrassment that took place this morning and was almost repeated this afternoon at five minutes before two o'clock will not occur again.

Madam Speaker: The hon. member has raised this question and I will want to inquire into what took place. I am sorry that the hon. member's wife was embarrassed. I will want to know whether new instructions have been issued—I am not aware of any at the present time—and exactly what they are. Even if it is found necessary to increase security around the House of Commons, I would certainly not want hon. members to be impeded in their function as MPs. They should be properly delivered to any door that they choose to come in through. I