

Privilege—Hon. M. Lambert

There is a further question—the policy convention is not going to take place here in this building. The Liberal party is not going to use committee rooms for actual policy convention doings. No, this is going to be the social adjunct, the hotel, the ballroom, the bars—everything. As my friend from Central Nova says, this could be the casino for the convention. Any party could hold a policy convention, and that is perfectly all right, in one of the hotels or one of the other centres designed for that purpose in this city, commercial premises for which they pay. But here they may pay for security service and they will pay for dining room facilities, all at a very nice rate, of course, but there is nothing that will be charged to them for the premises, nothing whatsoever.

It is a buckshee bonus for the gathering of the Liberal party that they should use these facilities for an adjunct, the social side of a policy convention. If they had made arrangements and there had been agreement that they would use committee rooms for some of their policy discussions, there might be some difficulty, but it would be much more acceptable than using Room 209 as a bar and Room 371 in the West Block as another bar.

● (1512)

Once or twice a year Mr. Speaker puts on a very gracious, dignified reception for members of parliament, Senators, and representatives of other countries, in the Hall of Honour. This is as it should be. However, you, sir, are the host for parliament and the function is under your patronage. In this case, not one of these functions is going to be under Your Honour's patronage, or they should not be.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I have before me the letter Your Honour wrote to the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) in his capacity as House leader of the official opposition with regard to these matters. I will only refer to the letter. It was rather strange that it was written the morning the article appeared in *Ottawa Today*, before there had been any representations by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton who wrote to you on February 7.

The last point I want to make is this. There is a very fine dividing line with regard to the catering facilities, including the provision of drink, on Parliament Hill, used by an indiscriminate group and whether this is in competition with the restaurateurs and hotelkeepers of the city of Ottawa. This is always a very sore point. Having been on the members' services committee and so forth, we know that sometimes there is a question with regard to the cafeteria facilities being used by members of parliament for visitors. It creates a division.

We have major hotels with ample facilities for all sorts of social functions, but they are being completely disregarded. One Liberal organizer, and I suppose he reflects the thinking among those who organize this sort of thing, seems to think that Parliament Hill belongs to their party, so why use the hotel facilities or drinking rooms of a hotel? In other words, they equate Parliament Hill facilities to cocktail lounges and

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

dance areas in hotels. I suggest this is a grave affront to the privileges of members of this House.

In the due administration of the facilities of this place, they can and should be used for activities with a parliamentary flavour. A party convention is not that. Certainly the social side of a party policy convention has nothing to do with parliamentary facilities. To that extent, the use of these premises as proposed should be denied by Mr. Speaker.

My colleagues have suggested that I draw to Your Honour's attention, if it is worth anything in the argument, that the last policy convention held by this party was held in Quebec city in entirely commercial premises. We certainly paid for them. That is as it should be. Under no circumstances should any political party use these premises for the social side of a convention which is held on other grounds.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in the interest of shortening the discussion on this subject and in the interest of getting on with the legislative program, I wish to make a very few comments with regard to the question of privilege that has been raised by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert).

It is to be understood and accepted that the hon. member's material has been derived substantially from anonymous sources in newspapers, which have been clothed in anonymous expressions like "Liberal organizers", and "a Liberal organizer said that". This is the first time I have heard the hon. member for Edmonton West attach such importance to anything a Liberal said, let alone an anonymous Liberal organizer.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Are you denying that?

Mr. MacEachen: I am saying he has information, for example, that is being put forward which is quite incorrect. He admitted himself in his statement, and I attempted to take his words down, that "We have had party functions in this building." Those are the words of the hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): We had a Christmas party, our caucus party.

Mr. MacEachen: It would require a hypocrite of dimensions that has not yet entered the House of Commons to attempt to cast the notion that activities of the kind described have not ever taken place in these buildings. We have all been invited to the press gallery dinner which takes place in this building. It is late at night.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): The Governor General goes to that. Is he going to the Liberal convention?

Mr. MacEachen: I would hesitate to divulge all the confidences we respect when we attend that marvellous annual occasion, with many hundreds of people coming into the