

matter resolved would be to recognize that there is a question of privilege which should be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections so that the whole matter can be reviewed, to stop at the outset what appears to be a growing and highly undesirable practice by the minister.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: I have listened carefully to this question of privilege which is now being raised by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). I will listen to a few other hon. members who I have noticed are rising to speak on the question. However, I just want to remind the hon. members of the House that I have already ruled on questions which were very similar and very close to this kind of question of privilege; namely, the erosion of the capacity of an hon. member to function in the face of someone else functioning beside him, parallel, or in some other way.

The present example which the hon. member is submitting is different, on the facts, from the examples on which I have ruled. As far as I can see from the intervention of the hon. member for Yukon, the principles involved are very much the same, and it is on those principles that I have previously ruled.

I will accept that the hon. member is not commenting on a ruling, but I want to ask other hon. members who might be wanting to intervene on this matter to point out to me the privilege and not debate whether one could have an office in the constituency close by one's own. I would like them to tell me where their privilege has been breached. I remind hon. members that privilege must deal with molestation, arrest—

An hon. Member: Or interference.

Madam Speaker:—or violence preventing the hon. member from functioning as a member in this House. Those are the basic rules on which a question of privilege can be based.

Mr. D. M. Collenette (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I will not speak for very long on this matter. It is my contention that this is a slight variation on the question upon which you ruled a few weeks ago. You have intimated that, but you are being generous with the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) in allowing further debate.

I submit that the opening of ministerial offices in any part of this country really comprises part of the administrative duties of any government. I am sure that when the hon. member for Yukon was a minister of the Crown offices of the Department of Public Works were located across the country—

An hon. Member: Not political offices.

Mr. Collenette:—and performed work similar to that which is being done by the office—

Mr. Clark: That is not true.

Privilege—Mr. Nielsen

Mr. Nielsen: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. The parliamentary secretary is way off line here. He says that I, as minister of public works, would have had ministerial offices throughout the country, and that is absolutely false. Even though I was permitted to have a ministerial office under Treasury Board guidelines, which are quite strict, in my own constituency of Yukon, I did not establish one there because I thought it would be too political to do so. I was probably the only minister in cabinet who did not establish such an office. Maybe there were others, I do not know.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): I did not either.

Mr. Nielsen: But when he accuses me of having ministerial offices all over the country, that is simply false.

Mr. Collenette: Madam Speaker, I said I would be brief and I will. I would appreciate the courtesy of the hon. member for Yukon, having listened to his argument, rather than raising a point of order and interrupting me somewhat rudely—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1540)

Mr. Collenette: It is my contention, Madam Speaker, that there is nothing unusual about this kind of practice. It falls within the normal ambit of the administrative duties of government. Therefore I think the hon. member for Yukon is really splitting herrings—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: He is pickling them!

Mr. Collenette: Madam Speaker, I am sorry for taking licence with the English language. Perhaps I have been in the House a little too much listening to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) putting more meaning into words than they have.

I think the argument is clear. There is no question of privilege; it is really a question of sensitivity on the part of the hon. member for Yukon. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro) has special responsibilities for the Northwest Territories and Yukon which fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

Second, if you are going to permit further argument, I submit, Madam Speaker, that you should reserve your ruling on this case until the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development appears in the House and chooses to respond. That would be the courteous thing to do.

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, I will be extremely brief and to the point, unlike the previous speaker. I want to make the specific point that what has happened here is that there are certain facts which are determined and established beyond question. One is that the minister in this instance has breached Treasury Board guidelines with respect to the establishment of ministerial offices. There