

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, September 25, 1964

The house met at 11 a.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. BOUTIN—FAILURE TO FLY QUEBEC FLAG
AT ROYAL 22ND REGIMENT CEREMONY

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-André Boutin (Dorchester): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is based on an article published in the September 24 issue of the newspaper *Le Droit* and entitled:

VanDoos allegedly refused permission to fly fleur-de-lis.

Presumably, the incident occurred during the ceremonies which took place on parliament hill Wednesday morning, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of this army unit. According to the press report, the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer) would have refused to let fleur-de-lis flags—the fleur-de-lis is the flag of the province of Quebec—be raised between the red ensigns placed around the national war memorial.

If such is the case, Mr. Speaker, I want to protest strongly against that insult and that outrage committed against the members of the Royal 22nd, a regiment almost entirely made up of French Canadians from the province of Quebec, in refusing them permission to fly the flag of their province during those ceremonies.

The Royal 22nd regiment is not the sole victim of that insult. The whole population of Quebec was insulted on that day.

Men of the VanDoos always conducted themselves as heroes in the various conflicts in which they took part. The valour, bravery and heroism of those French Canadians were reflected not only on the province of Quebec, but on Canada as a whole.

Again, today, it is the Royal 22nd which is entrusted with the peace keeping operations in Cyprus.

Everywhere and at all times the Royal 22nd has been a credit to Canada. It has produced thousands of heroes. It deserves better from the Canadian government than the insult to which it was subjected by the Department of National Defence last Wednesday.

Mr. Speaker, that was also an insult to French Canadians from Quebec and the other provinces. If my compatriots keep on being flouted as they were last Wednesday, the Quebec separatist movements will be justified up to a certain point.

Consequently, I would like the Minister of National Defence or, in his absence, the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) to explain or justify the refusal to fly the fleur-de-lis beside the red ensign during the ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Royal 22nd, and to present apologies to that unit.

[Text]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to decide whether there is a question of privilege. This is an action which was taken outside the house. It does not affect the honour of the house nor the honour of the members of the house, and is more in the nature of a grievance. I regret that I see no question of privilege at all.

[Later:]

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-André Boutin (Dorchester): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence.

Would the minister have an explanation to justify the refusal to fly the fleur-de-lis together with the red ensign at the ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of the Royal 22nd regiment?

[Text]

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman is referring to the newspaper report I saw yesterday, it was not within my responsibility.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister.

Following the question of privilege raised this morning by the hon. member for Dorchester, the Minister of National Defence