

*Privilege—Mr. Coates*

every individual member of parliament in what was happening on Canada's 100th birthday.

On this particular occasion, I have been informed of what was happening by what I read in the newspaper, heard from the media and from the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker). He has become aware of what is happening and has tried to make this House aware of the fact that what is happening is not in the best interests of this nation as a whole. It is urgently necessary for Your Honour to assume responsibilities on the part of all members of this House to see that all members are included. With the Speaker of the other place, Your Honour should see to it that all members of parliament from both Chambers have an opportunity to participate in every way they can at this late date. Canadians should be made aware that this is not some kind of partisan endeavour on the part of the Liberal government, but it is something in which all members of parliament wish to participate, in the hope that Canada will be a stronger and better place to live.

We look forward to Canada being a better place for our children to live in as a unified nation. If something is not done right away, I am fearful we will find ourselves in a position where the people of this nation do not even realize that there are other leaders and other political parties in this country. That may be something to laugh about, if you happen to come from the Liberal Party, but that is what irritates me no end. This should not be some kind of a partisan endeavour in which Liberals have a special right to participate. This is something for all Canadians.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Coates:** It is time for all Canadians to see all their members of parliament participating. No government has the right to spend taxpayers' dollars to finance a special show for the Prime Minister of this country, which excludes everybody else who happens to be a member in this House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Coates:** No government has the right to set up the Prime Minister of this country as some sort of saviour of this nation. Every member in this House has a very determined desire to participate and make Canada a stronger place than it is right now. We have no available way of doing that. The government has precluded us, one and all, unless you happen to be a member of the Liberal Party, from participating in any way.

It is nothing short of shocking and scandalous, as far as I am concerned, to think the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Danson) kicked off Canada Week. Canada Week is something we have never heard of before. It is not part of our constitution, unless hon. members on the other side are writing it day by day. The Minister of National Defence, speaking for the Prime Minister, appears to be the only member opposite who has anything to say about Canada Week, aside from the Secretary of State (Mr. Roberts). In a letter I have, the Prime Minister refers to Canada Day, which is a new day as far as I

[Mr. Coates.]

am concerned. There is no legislation in existence which signifies July 1 as Canada Day. Up to now July 1 has been Dominion Day. If the government wants to change Dominion Day to Canada Day, let them introduce legislation into this House and let them pass it. If they can introduce it and if it can secure majority approval, then I have no argument about it. I accept July 1 as being Dominion Day. By writing letters, the Prime Minister cannot legislate for this country; but it may be we are not too far from the day when he will be able to legislate by edict under his signature. I hope that day never arrives.

This is not going to be a week in which unity becomes highlighted in this nation. If this government continues to use this week for partisan political purposes, which is what it is doing right now, I have to object to that as strenuously as I can. I ask Your Honour to protect us as individual members of this House and to see to it that every member has the same rights. When we came to this Chamber, we elected you to protect each and every one of us. I ask you to give us that protection through your office. We do not have that protection right now, when one considers what has been planned for this week. It will be a terrible atrocity if this government is allowed to go forward with the program they are presenting to the people of this country.

As was indicated today, unfortunately the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) does not know anything about it. He cannot even answer the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) as to who is putting on the festivities and what they are about. Everybody in this Chamber now realizes the Acting Prime Minister has been eliminated from participating in any way, shape or form. That is a terrible thing to be happening in this country at this stage of our affairs.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[Translation]

**Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to give some information on what did happen today. Canada Week was inaugurated by the Council for Canadian Unity, a private organization which has requested permission to use the platform in front of the Parliament Buildings to launch Canada Week.

I can seek information to know if the federal government contribution was limited to lending the platform but I do not think so. I could bring some details tomorrow. I believe that the private organization which has inaugurated Canada Week is the Council for Canadian Unity.

● (1520)

[English]

**Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I hope the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Mr. Guilbault) has not lost sight of the fact that the question of privilege which was launched by my colleague goes far beyond the matter of Canada Week. It was not a private organization which sanctified July 1 as a date of some impor-