

Oral Questions

divisional audit officer, curiously enough on a statutory holiday?

Hon. Ron Basford (Acting Solicitor General): The Solicitor General has explained that that destruction occurred in the normal course of record destruction, common within agencies. I do not have the details of those procedures, but I am sure the Solicitor General will be happy to give them.

Mr. MacKay: The Solicitor General indicated that some of these files dated back to the year 1966, but he specifically did not say how current some of them were. I ask the acting minister to take as notice that perhaps the Solicitor General should reassure the House and the country that the operational case records classification and retention system specified in the manual of the RCMP procedures for destruction of files has been followed in all respects here. Perhaps I could refer the acting minister to some of the relevant material, that is pages 10 and 11 of appendix 2-3, records management manual of the force.

Mr. Basford: I will refer that to the Solicitor General.

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CANADA WEEK**REASON FOR FAILURE TO GIVE LEADERS OF OPPOSITION PARTIES OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN CELEBRATION**

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have two questions about the need of a royal commission to inquire into the obvious series of RCMP misdeeds, but in the absence of the Prime Minister and of the Solicitor General and the inadequacy of existing answers, I will switch topics.

I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. Is the Acting Prime Minister aware of the fact that at noon today at a function allegedly to be of a non-partisan nature, the kicking off of Canada Week to emphasize national unity, at which the Leader of the Official Opposition and I were invited to participate along with the Prime Minister, after the opening comments by the Minister of National Defence on behalf of the Prime Minister and following 50 minutes of entertainment, neither a representative of the Official Opposition nor of the NDP was called upon to speak at this non-partisan gathering accompanied by jets flying overhead in the front of the House of Commons?

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that.

An hon. Member: Liberal arrogance.

Mr. Broadbent: In view of the importance of maintaining a non-partisan approach to the question of national unity at this time and considering the importance of the rest of the week's activities, will the Acting Prime Minister assure the House that he will investigate that incident and that the rest of the

[Mr. MacKay.]

events this week celebrating our past and looking forward to our future will be of a non-partisan nature?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1430)

Mr. MacEachen: I will be eager to investigate what deprived the leader of the New Democratic Party from making a statement this morning. I will agree with him on the necessity of a non-partisan approach to the question of national unity where it is possible because there are certain interests in the field in which there can be differences. I agree with the hon. member that the maximum amount of unanimity on this subject is desirable.

Mr. Broadbent: Certainly, it is important that the Prime Minister of the day act as Prime Minister at certain of these activities. I, for one, do not begrudge that and I will make that clear. He is spokesman for all Canadians. His party happens to have a majority and in certain functions I agree he should speak for the country. I should like to ask the Acting Prime Minister if he will assure the House, however, that at those other functions this week which are officially described as non-partisan in which the other parties have been invited to participate, they damn well will participate.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, as I said, I will investigate the circumstances but I have been informed that the organization, the selection of speakers and so on for today was under the auspices of a private organization.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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DOMINION DAY**PARTICIPATION OF LEADERS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN CELEBRATIONS**

Mr. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to contain one's amazement at that answer. Perhaps the Acting Prime Minister could dispel the mystery surrounding this week's events if he would say whether the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the New Democratic Party and a spokesman for the Social Credit Party will participate and speak on July 1 in front of the Parliament Buildings.

An hon. Member: Just a simple answer.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position either to verify or disagree because I am not involved in the preparation of the program.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: You have to be a Liberal to be a good Canadian?

Mr. Grafftey: You make Mackenzie King look like a statesman.