

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I had a question, but if Your Honour is now calling it three o'clock, I shall proceed to my question of privilege.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. LAMBERT (EDMONTON WEST)—PARLIAMENT HILL—USE OF FACILITIES FOR LIBERAL PARTY CONVENTION

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, in compliance with Standing Order 17(2) I sent to your office the terms of the question of privilege I am going to raise today, along with the nature of the motion I would put in the event you agreed that I had a prima facie question of privilege. The subject matter I wish to refer to affects all the members of this House and of the other place because, in my view, it is a very serious misuse of parliamentary facilities.

● (1502)

It was my privilege some years ago to occupy the chair that you now occupy. I have a full sense of responsibility for the proper administration of this building and its facilities as well as their use for parliamentary purposes. To that and I can do nothing better than quote what you, Mr. Speaker, stated on June 27, 1977. At that time a question was raised by my colleague, the hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester-North (Mr. Coates) concerning the use of parliamentary facilities by commercial or other bodies for their purposes. It was reported at pages 7103 and 7104 of *Hansard*. You said, among other things:

I have attempted to develop a policy that whenever these premises are used by hon. members to receive Canadian people who are taxpayers or visitors, there ought to be some parliamentary connection. We have attempted to do some things which would on the one hand encourage that activity to take place, because it is at the very root of our democratic system. However, on the other hand we must see to it that this does not become a commercial establishment and that events are not held here when they ought to be held in commercial premises. Therefore, what I am attempting to do is to exert some influence over the content of what takes place on these premises and to bear in mind that when the buildings of parliament are being used the activities should have a parliamentary flavour and a parliamentary purpose.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair cannot hear the hon. member.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Even if that were the motivation, which I feel all hon. members endorse, it would not be expected that I would want to inquire on every occasion into the full details of the agenda and of the arrangements, but I think it ought to be expected that since the parliament buildings are being used, I, on behalf of all members of parliament, ought to attempt to encourage the highest possible use and the appearance of the highest possible use, to the best interests and motivations of the premises.

I apologize, Mr. Speaker, in some degree for the length of that citation, but I think at that time you had addressed yourself to the nub of the question.

On this occasion we have a proposed use of the premises on Parliament Hill which, I suggest to you, is not of a parliamentary purpose and not of a parliamentary activity.

Privilege—Hon. M. Lambert

Of course, it may be said all the party caucuses hold parties on the Hill. They hold a Christmas party and they occasionally hold another gathering of caucus members in the restricted area of the West Block where there are eating facilities and other entertainment facilities. There is a limited guest list. But I am of the opinion, having read what has appeared in the press as given by representatives of the Liberal party—in that connection I do not think it is the Chair that forms part of and has intimate knowledge of what goes on in the Liberal party—that it determines what is going to be done here, in this building, the use of the Hall of Honour, the Confederation Room in the West Block and the West Block cafeteria, and possibly of some of the other areas as well. There has been no consultation with other party representatives on what will be done with those premises.

We have the news reports, and I believe they will stand being put on the record. In *Ottawa Today*, Monday's edition reported the following:

To keep them entertained, Liberal party organizers are planning 26 bars—dispensing booze at a mere 75 cents a shot—and three bands to fill the West Block cafeteria, a ball room, a parliamentary meeting room and the stately Hall of Honour that separates the Commons and Senate Chambers.

And then in quotes it states:

"Who wants to drink and dance in some hotel basement room when you can use Parliament?" one planner quipped.

In the *Ottawa Citizen* of last night, February 7, the following appeared:

Organizers of the February 24-26 Liberal pre-election convention intend to use a West Block cafeteria, a ball room, a committee room and the Hall of Honour, which separates the House of Commons and the Senate in the Centre Block, to welcome—

And here is the point that is the big difference:

—3,000-4,000 "party"-goers.

And in quotes it states:

"Who wants to drink and dance in some hotel basement room when you can use parliament?" said a Liberal organizer.

Entertainment for the event will be furnished by three bands and drinks will be available at any one of 26 bars.

These premises are subject to security control at all times. In the past we have had party functions where there were limited numbers and there have been security problems. There is no parliamentary function with a parliamentary purpose that will admit, in this building and in the West Block, some 3,000 to 4,000 persons, without the creation of very distinctive security problems.

What about the use of these buildings by other members who have a right to be in the West Block?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): There is no time stated but 3,000 to 4,000 people will be invited to attend. The party organizers are not going to screen visitors, they want to have as many as possible. That goes well beyond the proper use of these buildings.