

Privilege—Mr. Nystrom

they are a little better at it than the Liberals were when they were over there. That is not the question either. If the Conservative party wants to put its members to work, God bless them, but let them pay for it and not find a way to get funds out of the public treasury to pay for the expenses and to get the report printed. In addition, they should not engage in an affront to Parliament by giving the idea that somehow this is a parliamentary committee. It is not a parliamentary committee any more than our Ogle-Blaikie committee is a parliamentary committee. We put them to work. We think it is a good idea that they are doing what they are doing, but they are doing it on behalf of our caucus, and the results of their study will be reflected in the things that are said from this corner of the House in due course.

I believe this is a very serious issue, Mr. Speaker, and I really think that the best way to resolve it would be for the ministers involved to say that they moved too quickly into this thing, that they are prepared to back up and withdraw the whole operation, and that the Progressive Conservative party will put up the funds that have been spent improperly in this way.

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, the issue has been clouded. There is a very narrow point I should like to bring to your attention.

The former minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board appointed by order in council a commission under Justice Hall. There was no problem in relation to paying his expenses because he was undertaking a mission relating to issues associated with the movement of grain. I would point out to you, sir, that the minister now in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board has done that very thing. He has appointed individuals to a commission to undertake a job because of their ability and capability of bringing in a report that will be knowledgeable and acceptable to the growers of grain in western Canada.

The question you have to decide, sir, is whether members of Parliament are ineligible for appointment to these commissions. If you rule that they are ineligible, then certainly the government will have to be guided by that. For the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board not to have the privilege of appointing a commission to bring in a report on an issue would be in exact opposition to what the former minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board did in respect of the Hall commission.

I just want to bring to your attention, sir, that the question is whether members of Parliament, as chosen in this case by the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, should be allowed to serve in that capacity.

An hon. Member: One o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It being one o'clock I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

● (1400)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Deniger (Laprairie): Mr. Speaker, I also wish to contribute to this very important debate on the question of privilege raised by our colleague from Yorkton-Melville, but I wish to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I shall be very brief. I shall be brief because the points raised by my colleague from Stormont-Dundas are self-explanatory, as are those raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). First of all, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that it is in all sincerity that I speak this afternoon because it is not the first time unfortunately that I have an opportunity to speak about this tragic matter.

Indeed, as we can see on pages 1374, 1375 and 1376 of *Hansard* for November 15, I rose in the House to tell the minister how disappointed I was that he had interfered with the rights and privileges of members of Parliament by not inviting us to take part in this debate. The minister knew very well that certain members of both main parties on the other side of the House could have taken part in this task force.

Mr. Speaker, the minister said earlier that since the House was not sitting, he found it difficult to call on members of other parties. However, he only had to look at the example that you yourself, Mr. Speaker, gave to the House this summer when you led a mission to China accompanied by members on both sides of the House. He had only to think also about the meeting of the parliamentary union held this summer in Venezuela while the House was in recess and while delegates from both sides of the House attended.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the argument made by the minister concerning the lack of daily business in the House and the fact that the House was not sitting does not hold water.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to remind the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers) who spoke just before me that he erred thoroughly because there is a world of difference between, on the one hand, appointing a judge as chairman of a commission of inquiry and, on the other hand, appointing a member of the House on a commission of inquiry without allowing hon. members of the opposition to sit on that commission.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Deniger: As you know, Mr. Speaker, I was elected last May 22. Before, I was under the impression that all members of the House were treated equally.

An hon. Member: Not quite!

Mr. Deniger: Unfortunately, I deplore the attitude of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski), whom I respect