

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker:—enjoying the situation, but I doubt whether it would be in order to pursue the matter. I might say that when the hon. member for Fundy-Royal asked the same question originally I thought it should not be allowed because I do not consider the question asked to be one of national urgency.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, if I leave the answer at the point at which I was it would do an injustice to the man concerned. This would be quite unfair. In the circumstances I believe I should be permitted to complete the answer, the question having been asked. If there is not to be an injustice done to the person involved, I believe the answer should be permitted. The answer is that this person did not go, as did the other guests, directly to the place of registration. They intercepted him—

An hon. Member: That was Russ Jackson.

Mr. McIlraith:—and asked him if he was there in connection with the conference. He promptly said he was and produced his identification. They apologized immediately and profusely. He seemed to be satisfied at the time that the incident was closed.

Mr. Speaker: I wonder whether the minister is now satisfied that the answer has been given.

Some hon. Members: More, More!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I must make the statement that this is not a matter of such national urgency that a supplementary question should be allowed at this time. If the hon. member wishes to pursue the matter he might ask a supplementary at the time of adjournment.

Mr. Lewis: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. With the very greatest respect to you, sir, another question might have received an answer in respect of the behaviour of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers involved at the place and at the time, which does make it a matter of national concern. If I may say so with respect I would urge Your Honour not to dismiss the consideration of this matter, because the reports in the newspapers indicate that these police officers disguised themselves as press representatives and had—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me we are going to spend some time on this matter and therefore we might as well have the supplementary as a lengthy point of order. I will allow the supplementary.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, could the Solicitor General indicate to the House whether it is common practice to have RCMP undercover agents masquerade as members of the press?

Mr. McIlraith: No. I think, however, I should answer the part of the question referring to the reports in the press about the wearing of a press badge, which is properly a matter of some concern to the public. The members of the RCMP did not disguise themselves in any way, but shortly before this incident they were requested by the hotel manager to accept these badges so that they would not be questioned because they were there without any identification. The badges were provided for them. I think they ought not to have accepted the badges.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, so that other people will not find themselves in the position of being picked up or pushed out if they attend a Liberal meeting, would the minister say whether the action taken was under some anti-pollution provision?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Having heard the original question, the supplementary and the point of order I believe I was right in my opinion at first that there was some doubt whether the question should be allowed at all.

Mr. Burton: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

AGRICULTURE

REQUESTED RECONVENING OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. R. R. Southam (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. In light of the many serious problems facing the Canadian agricultural industry and in view of the fact that a month has now elapsed since the session commenced, will the minister take immediate steps to reconvene the Standing Committee on Agriculture in an endeavour to solve these basic problems?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, in my opinion there is no doubt that this committee will be reconvened to