

I am a little sorry that my friends to my right seem to think that the blame should be put on hon. members opposite. I do not want to blame the hon. minister opposite. I want her help. The hon. member for Northwest Territories says the minister was most kind to him when she spoke to him Sunday afternoon after the event was over, and I am sure she would not condone what has happened, but I hope somehow this matter can be sorted out and, if the time comes when Your Honour feels that either I or the hon. member for Northwest Territories has a prima facie case of privilege, either he or I will be prepared to make the necessary motion to refer to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections the specific matter of certain officials interfering with the election process.

Hon. Iona Campagnolo (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, the chief magistrate of one of the host cities of the Arctic Winter Games has certain privileges in the administration of his city, but I do not believe it is our purpose to determine the scope of those administrative duties here.

I would like to note that there are two separate matters at issue in the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), and I thank him for giving me the information he did at the beginning of the question period. The first is the alleged lack of recognition by the games organizers of the presence of the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth) at the opening ceremonies. The second point, I believe, is whether it was appropriate for the hon. member for Northwest Territories to use the assembly, for which all travel costs had been paid by the people of Canada, as an occasion at which to hold his nominating meeting for the next federal election in the Mackenzie constituency.

On the first point I would like to point out that there was a great deal of informality at the opening ceremonies of these games. The dais was crowded with honoured guests. Indeed, it was overcrowded with honoured guests, many of whom were not accorded public recognition in other than general terms.

As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre mentioned, I in fact did see the hon. member for Northwest Territories immediately after the ceremonies concluded. He was taking pictures from the front part of the dais, as he had moved himself from the seat he had, closer to the second row. The hon. member approached me, and I told him that if I had known he was there I would have recognized him in my preamble, as I certainly would have. However, I would like to note that there was no introduction of guests on the program. There was a spoken program. A man was acting as M.C.

Also on the platform was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Milne), and he was not introduced either. I am sure that the parliamentary secretary was not being intimidated because he intended to have his nominating meeting for Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe as part of the opening of the Arctic Winter Games.

On the second point, which I feel is the more important point, the propriety or lack of it with regard to using the

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Arctic Winter Games as a vehicle for a collective meeting of northerners for a nomination meeting, I can only say that hon. members opposite have frequently said to me that they wish to see less involvement of politics in sport.

I am absolutely not in a position to comment on what was said between the mayor of Hay River and the hon. member for Northwest Territories. I have no way of establishing what was said in that conversation or if, indeed, it took place, as I am quite sure the hon. member will tell me when he returns. What one individual says to another is quite beyond the realm of purview of my ministry. However, just before making this statement I confirmed that the hon. member for Northwest Territories was and is a fully accredited official of the Arctic Winter Games. In addition, the Arctic Winter Games organizing committee has the hon. member registered as a V.I.P. of the society, which, I understand, grants him automatic inclusion in all events.

I regret very much that any slur might be cast upon the Arctic Winter Games, and I know that is not the intention of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. The Arctic Winter Games is the largest event of this type in the world above the 60th parallel, and since more than 600 athletes from Alaska, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories, organizers and volunteers, are all involved, I do not believe any of them should suffer because of the politicization of superb hospitality and fellowship for which these games are famous. I regret that the hon. member for Northwest Territories feels that a discourtesy has been done him, and I hope that we may look forward to the next Arctic Winter Games in 1980 in Whitehorse without any such charges of political opportunism being levelled.

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I cannot understand what all the fuss is about. I think the question of privilege is quite spurious. I can see nothing wrong with the holding of a convention, whether it be at the Arctic Winter Games, at the Sourdough Rendez-vous or anywhere else. The question is one of popularity between a local member of parliament and local officials. I can only express my disappointment.

The minister has said that the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth) is a fully accredited official of the Arctic Winter Games. I was not even invited, and yet my constituency is very vitally involved in this event of such magnitude, as the minister describes it, above the 60th parallel.

I can see nothing wrong in what has happened. As I say, it depends entirely upon the popularity of the hon. member involved with his own local officials, and perhaps he should improve his p.r. The Liberals held a convention in the middle of the Sourdough Rendez-vous a few years ago. I found nothing wrong in that.

Before I resume my seat, Mr. Speaker, with respect to Your Honour's announcement on the question of pages for the House of Commons—and I cast no reflection on Your Honour's announcement in this respect—the territories were omitted, and they should be included.