

Privilege

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member is right, but my task is quite clear. The question must be acceptable under the Standing Orders of the House, and that is my decision.

[*English*]

I have to advise hon. members that Question Period is concluded.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of an Australian parliamentary delegation led by Senator John Olsen.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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PRIVILEGE

VIMY MEMORIAL SERVICE

Mr. Bill Kempling (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, yesterday hundreds of people congregated on a few acres of France that are forever Canada. They came to the lovely park land containing the Vimy Memorial.

Every November, crowds of French citizens join our own dignitaries and troops at the special service of remembrance to commemorate the 60,000 Canadians who were killed in the First World War.

The memorial itself stands on top of Vimy Ridge, the site of Canada's first and greatest victory. Our soldiers had been drawn from armies to form the Canadian corps in an attempt to take the heavily defended ridge. On April 9, 1917 they succeeded and won everlasting respect. My father was in that battle.

The French government graciously granted Canada some of that historic site in perpetuity. As I said, hundreds of French men women and children went there yesterday and joined our ambassador to France, Mr. Claude Charland, in paying tribute to those Canadians who fell in the First World War.

Let Canadians do the same on Remembrance Day.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

WHETHER QUESTION IN ORDER

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a question of privilege regarding what happened earlier when I put a question in this House.

There is a Constitution in this country and there are public statutes. There is a government, and within that government a department responsible for federal-provincial relations. This department is responsible for managing relations with members of the federation, and therefore one of the important questions, Mr. Speaker, is how relations between members of the federation and the central government are managed.

When a member of Parliament rises in the House to ask a minister of the Crown, a senior cabinet minister, and I am referring to the Deputy Prime Minister, to tell the country how he intends to subordinate the rights of nations to federal-provincial relations, I submit, Mr. Speaker, that this is a matter that directly concerns the House. If any question should concern this House above all others, it is democracy, the future of the people of Canada and the future of the people of Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand why statements made at a party convention about Quebec's right to self-determination are considered in such a restrictive light that a government is under no obligation to inform this House what it intends to do.

[*English*]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the rules of the House are very clear. I am moved to observe that if the hon. member is so interested in the proceedings of the Quebec wing of the Progressive Conservative Party, he should ask himself why he was so quick to leave it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I also wish to rise in this debate, because I wonder why our government or a minister of the Crown cannot answer this kind of question when in 1952, the Right Hon. Louis Saint-Laurent supported Resolution 673 at the United Nations which was precisely about the right of nations to self-determination. This position was again taken by the UN in 1960, in Resolution 1514, which was