

*Privilege—Mr. W. Baker*

That is what happened in this place, Madam Speaker. Research assistance from one party in this House of Commons was given to the little red rump down there, assistance which they were not prepared to give to the other party.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Speaker Jerome continued:

This being the case, that fund is available for individual caucus committees to carry out research, to be used in whatever way the particular caucus sees fit.

That is the third injustice in this matter and the third point of the judgment of a former Speaker of this House with respect to this activity.

I shall not quote the whole of Speaker Jerome's judgment, but I think it is worth while reading and considering it. In my respectful submission, it applies precisely to the facts and allegations in this case. Speaker Jerome continues at page 2181 of *Hansard*:

—it seems to me to be preferable that it is strictly the caucus research budget that would be employed to that end.

It is not the budget of the federal-provincial relations office, the budget of the Privy Council or of any minister of the crown, but funds which are distributed on a more or less equal basis to all members of the House of Commons. That is a strong statement by the former Speaker of this House.

The last extract of Speaker Jerome's judgment which I will put on the record is this:

I am simply saying to the House, though not in a formal finding of privilege, that in my opinion the greater wisdom would be to ensure that in every case where this is done, where public funds are used to support such a committee even if it is an informal committee, such a committee consist of members of more than one party.

Obviously what he is saying is that it is improper for the government to use its resources in the public service and elsewhere to support only those groups of members or parties in this House of Commons who happen to support the position of the government. That is what happened here. There is a sense of unfairness.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Madam Speaker, as I said earlier—and I will repeat it briefly because I know the member opposite who is smiling is impatient to get home—

**Mr. Chénier:** No, go right ahead.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** We have three possibilities in this case. The identical wording of the New Democratic Party's study paper and the government report is entirely coincidental; that is the first possibility. It is an entirely fortuitous accident that that occurred. The wording is identical even right down to the commas.

**Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody):** Madam Speaker, I just want to know how much time the hon. member has used up on this question of privilege. So far I have not understood his explanation.

**An hon. Member:** Sit down.

**Mr. Rose:** I am sure the House would be prepared to grant unanimously a request by him for extra time so he can explain.

**Madam Speaker:** This is the difficulty in which I find myself. That is why I am listening to the hon. member, in order to make certain that I really understand the question he is putting before the House and make a judgment on it. I have to listen to him, but I must tell the House that I have several other questions of privilege to hear this afternoon. I do not want to push the House into concluding its business sooner than it would like to. Nevertheless, other members have questions of privilege. I have to listen to them all. I have no problem. I am here as long as the members want me to stay. But I think some fairness should be demonstrated in distributing time among members. The hon. member for Nepean-Carleton knows that better than anyone else. I ask him if he would kindly come to the point.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Madam Speaker, I would not want to infringe on the rights of other members of Parliament. Therefore, I will sum up my argument.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** There is evidence available to substantiate further the allegation which I made. I want to repeat the allegation because it is part of the prima facie case. It is that "solid sources have identified the author of the Broadbent paper as a constitutional adviser in the federal-provincial relations office of the federal cabinet". That is part of the case that Your Honour must consider in terms of whether there is a prima facie case. There is other evidence as well.

● (1420)

I want to go back to where I was before I was interrupted by the hon. member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. Rose). I said that we have three possibilities in the prima facie case before you. They are as follows. The first is that the identical wording of the NDP and the government report is entirely coincidental.

**Mr. Chénier:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Absolutely coincidental. No one read anything, no one prepared anything; the words came from heaven all the same. That is the first possibility. As I said before lunch, one would have to go a long way to honestly believe and accept that.

The second possibility is this. Some agent of the New Democratic Party in the dark of the night—I do not know who it would be, whether the hon. member for Mission-Port Moody who was wearing a bag on his head—stole into the Privy Council office in the dead of the night and made off with a draft of the government papers. It could be that. Virtue is claimed by that party. I am sure that if they did that, they would get up and admit it. Then the RCMP could lay the appropriate charges against them. That is the second possibility.

The third possibility is the only remaining one because the others are so incongruous as to not be believable. I suggest that