

least at this point in time. The Hon. Member stated, "There was an attempt to gag, to muzzle, to influence the type of evidence to be presented to our committee". The Hon. Member for Burnaby also indicated that "the evidence was vetted". He also stated, "There was an attempt to manipulate evidence". At another point, the Hon. Member talked about the disappearance of key documents.

With regard to the muzzling, the gagging, or the attempt to influence, there is no direct evidence. There was no direct evidence before the committee. But having stated that, the allegations were serious enough to deserve an investigation. Even though the parole officers were not prepared "to go public", they did in fact give *in camera* evidence before a committee.

I hope that prior to drawing the conclusions that the Hon. Member for Burnaby has drawn, an opportunity will be given to investigate these particular allegations. As I understand, the Solicitor General (Mr. Kelleher) has undertaken to investigate the allegations in order to understand what occurred at the meetings in question, and then to report back to the House.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, there are always two sides to every story. Unfortunately, certain Members decide to draw conclusions after hearing only one side of a particular story. I would ask you, Sir, prior to making your decision in this matter, to hear the other side of the story. I do not know what the eventual investigation might show, but we have a responsibility to act responsibly in the circumstances rather than proceeding to condemn individuals and to draw conclusions before we have all the information before us.

There were other members of the justice committee who were present at the meetings in question. I hope that the Chair will at least seek the opinions of the others to determine what in fact is the accurate version of events.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of comments with respect to matters that arose from the submissions of the Hon. Member for York South—Weston who, at least until today, I had understood was the official critic of the Liberal Party. The Solicitor General seems to have jumped into bed with that Member. I want to suggest—

**Mr. Speaker:** There is always a temptation to enter into some good-natured and partially partisan comment on the part of Hon. Members. When we are discussing a point of privilege, and especially where there is a suggestion made that something very serious might be taking place that ought not to have, I would ask that all Hon. Members refrain from making partisan comments and direct their remarks to the information that the Chair needs, and that is the issue of privilege which has been brought in front of the Chair.

**Mr. Robinson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will refrain from any further comment on the comments of the Hon. Member.

It was suggested that perhaps it might be appropriate to wait until the other members of the justice committee returned

*Privilege—Mr. Robinson*

to the House to raise this point. As Your Honour will confirm, there is a duty and obligation on Members of this House to bring to the attention of Your Honour, at the earliest possible opportunity, any alleged breach of privilege. I believe that in bringing this matter before the House today and asking that Your Honour reserve any decision until members of the justice committee have had an opportunity to make any submissions that they may see fit to make, I am performing the requirement that I have to perform in terms of the rules of this House in bringing the matter before Your Honour at the earliest possible opportunity and not waiting. The suggestion by the Hon. Member for York South—Weston that I should have waited to bring this matter before the House, and I know that he is a relatively new Member, but certainly with experience he will—

**Mr. Speaker:** I have no quarrel with the Hon. Member for Burnaby for bringing the matter before the House today. Of course, there is a rule of which we are all very familiar, that a question of privilege should be brought at the earliest opportunity. From some things stated by the Hon. Member for Burnaby and the Hon. Member for York South—Weston, I took it that there is some disagreement between them over exactly how this might have been handled. That is a matter which is interesting to the Speaker, but it does not affect what the Speaker is called upon to do, and that is to either find a *prima facie* case of privilege, or to find that there is not a *prima facie* case of privilege.

The Hon. Member for Burnaby will conclude his remarks.

**Mr. Robinson:** On that particular point, I wish to make it clear to Your Honour that while I was referring to two separate events, that is, the transfer of Avery in particular on the eve of our visit and, of course, linked to that the documents which disappeared which he wished to present to the committee on the one hand, and the meeting which took place with supervisors on the other, I was not in any way suggesting that those two events together constituted a breach of privilege.

Indeed, it is my submission that the alleged attempt to influence the nature of evidence given to the committee in and of itself constitutes a breach of privilege of Members of this House. I want it to be made very clear that I do not seek to establish any linkage between those two events.

In other words, should Your Honour find that there was not a breach of privilege with respect to the transfer of one of the prisoners, as my colleague for York South—Weston has suggested that, in my respectful submission, would in no way diminish the significance of the other circumstance with respect to breach of privilege.

• (1610)

Finally, I would note that while it has been suggested, again by the Hon. Member for York South—Weston in his submission, that there was no direct evidence with respect to the attempt to influence the information that came before the justice committee, surely that fundamentally misses the point.