

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 7, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

[English]

PRIVILEGE

BUDGET LEAK—RCMP TESTIMONY

Mr. Speaker: I should advise the House that I have received, in appropriate form, a notice of an application on a question of privilege. The hon. member for Oshawa.

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of the House the possibility, and I emphasize “the possibility”, of a contempt of Parliament, which is an extremely serious matter as all members of the House would agree.

I am seeking a ruling from Your Honour as to whether or not a *prima facie* case can be made on this important subject. If so, I would be willing to move, at the end of my brief comments, the appropriate motion.

Your Honour, my concern arises from conflicting testimony. One set of testimony occurred before a court of law in this city yesterday. The other occurred before a committee of the House earlier this year.

Your Honour, on June 13 the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Mr. Norman Inkster, appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General. The bulk of the questions put to the Commissioner on that day concerned the investigation by the RCMP of the budget leak that took place in April of this year and the subsequent laying of charges against a number of individuals by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Members of the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party repeatedly asked the Commissioner about the possibility of political interference in that process. In reply to questions put by a New Democrat

member of Parliament, the member for Victoria, the Commissioner of the RCMP said the following:

The officer who investigated the case swore that he had reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a crime had been committed.

He went on to say:

The atmosphere in which the investigation was conducted had no influence on the outcome of the investigation.

A third quote from a number of others that might be selected on the same subject, in reply to the member for Victoria the Commissioner stated:

In all this investigation there has never been any political influence.

By the way, this evidence of Mr. Inkster was reported back to the House in a report on the Estimates for 1989-90. So it is a subject matter that has left the committee and is now before the House of Commons. Yesterday, in a court here in the city of Ottawa, Staff Sergeant Richard Jordan provided evidence that completely contradicted what Commissioner Inkster had to say. The court—

Mr. Speaker: I have allowed the hon. member to proceed and I think his point is made. It is not necessary for the Chair to go into what somebody did or did not say in the courtroom and I remind hon. members that that evidence may not even be concluded yet.

However, I have the point that the hon. member is making and I would ask him to continue his argument. He does not need to go into what was or was not said yesterday. The point that the hon. member is making is that both in the courtroom and as reported in the press there are statements which, at least allegedly, might be taken as contradictory to the statement which is on the public record, of course, made earlier by another member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to which the hon. member has referred. So I would ask the hon. member to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Broadbent: Of course I respect what you have had to say and I simply give one quote to make my point that there is a contradiction. Yesterday Staff Sergeant Richard Jordan stated: