

principle of whether or not the privileges and rights of all members are equal; because as it stands at this point, they have been recognized by this House as not being equal.

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I should like to speak to the point raised by the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) as well as to part of the alleged question of privilege regarding the program for senior citizens called New Horizons. As I told hon. members yesterday when the matter was raised for the first time, I had not recently seen the memo in question. Of course, I went to get a copy of it as soon as possible, and I should like to inform hon. members that memos giving a short description of each project go to every member of Parliament asking them, if they have any questions, to telephone my office. An identical memo which, instead of asking members whether they have any questions, asks them to give any comments they might have was always sent to Liberal members of Parliament—

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not want to interrupt the minister but I think I have to interrupt her in view of your admonition at the outset of the remarks of the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) that there could be no reference to your decision yesterday. Therefore, I rise to remind you that that also applies to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) as it did to the hon. member for Peterborough.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) is absolutely right. I was so preoccupied in listening to the minister's argumentation that his point just slipped my attention. The hon. member for Nepean-Carleton is absolutely right and I would ask the minister not to refer to my ruling of yesterday.

Miss Bégin: Needless to say, Madam Speaker, I am not referring to or questioning your decision of yesterday. I was speaking to what my predecessor in the portfolio has just raised and on which he was not ruled out of order by you, so far as I understand. I was also speaking to the question of privilege raised a few minutes ago by the hon. member for Peterborough, at the end of which he referred to a practice which he thinks exists in my department and in my office to which I must reply in the name of all Canadian seniors so as to do what the hon. member for Rosedale wants, namely, to restore integrity to that program. I am informing my colleagues—

Mr. Cossitt: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Yesterday when I attempted to pursue this matter you ruled then, as you have ruled again today, that it could not be pursued. Yet despite the fact that five or ten minutes ago you ruled that it could not be pursued—and this has been drawn to your attention by our House leader—the minister keeps on pursuing it. I think she should be stopped immediately; otherwise, if she is allowed to continue to do so, I think everyone

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else should be allowed to follow her and comment on her remarks. Because I have things that are left unsaid which I would have liked to say but did not do so because I abided by your ruling. Why should the minister be allowed to pursue this matter, thereby giving a privilege to Liberal members over members on this side of the House?

Madam Speaker: It is a matter of whether a member is debating my ruling. I do not feel the minister was debating it; she was making comments on or references to similar cases which were brought up today and to what happened yesterday in the House. I think it would be wiser if we heard at this point—if the Minister of National Health and Welfare would agree—the Secretary of State (Mr. Fox), who will undoubtedly be able to address himself more directly to the point raised by the hon. member for Peterborough.

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Francis Fox (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First I wish to say that although I was in the House yesterday, I was not in however when for the first time the hon. member raised this question of access to the lists of new citizens. The first time I heard anything about this matter was this afternoon when he raised it again in the House. The hon. member complains about the fact that he was not given a list of names of new citizens. With regard to this, Madam Speaker, I would like to reassure the House and inform all members that the policy of the Secretary of State is to give to all members, on one condition I shall explain later and regardless of their political affiliation, access to lists of names of new citizens who have just acquired their citizenship in the preceding months. Hon. members who have been in the house for some years know full well that their access to this list depends on a commitment they have made some years ago to the effect that they would use these lists of new citizens only to welcome them into the great Canadian family to which they belong hereafter.

Madam Speaker, at the beginning of this session the office of the Secretary of State sent the new members a new letter advising them that they could have access to the lists of new citizens on the condition, of course, that they use these names only to welcome new citizens in our country. Therefore, Madam Speaker, this is the policy and it applies to all members and all members who advised my department that they wished to receive the names have received them since that time.

The hon. member alleges in the House today that he has not received the name list, but I am not aware of these facts. I would like to ask questions and get to the bottom of this. The policy is clear and precise, it is well established and I think that if the hon. member had asked questions in the House and given me prior notice I could have given him an appropriate