

available to one political party in the House of Commons and not to another. I think that is true; it is. That is why I think this case smacks—indeed, it goes further than that, it stinks—of exactly the same things, Your Honour's predecessor dealt with.

I want now to establish a *prima facie* case of privilege, and then I intend to put a motion which I would ask you to consider.

Mr. Broadbent: Are you catching your breath, Walter?

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): No, I am looking for one of your quotes. Excuse me, Madam Speaker. I just want to—

Mr. Broadbent: That is better than what preceded it, Walter; it has more intellectual content.

Madam Speaker: The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Collenette) on a point of order.

Mr. Collenette: Madam Speaker, before we adjourned for lunch you indicated that you were not yet satisfied that the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton had established grounds for a question of privilege. Perhaps I could ask him, through you, Madam Speaker, how much time he wishes to have to try to prove that he has a question of privilege. I want to speak to this alleged question of privilege, but what he is doing right now by not articulating the question of privilege is prohibiting other members from this side or his own side from contributing to the point that he is raising.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, that is the usual useful intervention from my friend. I would not want to accuse him of filibustering in the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Cullen: Hypocrites!

Mr. Hees: Stop wasting time, you folks.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I am having some difficulty speaking over the gruntings from the other side. I guess my friend was not in the House—he was out in the lobby or somewhere—when I gave you some additional facts which establish what I think has to be established at this time, and that is a *prima facie* case of privilege. Circumstances which so fall together that they cannot be regarded by any rational person as anything like a coincidence are worthy of examination. That is the point. I think they do. I think there is a conspiratory aspect to this case. The coincidences just dovetail too much for any rational person to believe otherwise.

● (1410)

Having dealt with the intervention by my friend the parliamentary secretary, I shall now turn to how the Speaker dealt with these matters. On December 10, 1979, as reported in *Hansard* at page 2180, he said this:

Both questions of privilege make reference to a practice which was admitted to by the Minister of Transport and, to a lesser extent—or to a less formalized

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extent—by the Minister of Agriculture, in the sense that in the months since the election and the formation of the new government committees which were in fact entirely committees of the government caucus were encouraged to carry out investigation work in their particular fields and, in addition to being encouraged, were in fact financially supported through government funding. In some cases this entailed assistance in travelling, in some cases in defraying staff charges of research advice and in others in printing and publication of documents.

That is precisely the case here. My allegation is that the assistance which has been given by the federal-provincial office to the Leader of the New Democratic Party, with respect to the preparation of its document which has now gone to Great Britain is research, advice and assistance in the printing and publishing of documents, all of which fell right within what Speaker Jerome found to be improper. Indeed, it gave an advantage in terms of research and service to one party which was not given to all parties in the House of Commons. That is my first point.

Speaker Jerome went on to say this:

—but it is a very difficult point for the Chair to decide—

It had not happened before, as I said. He went on to say:

—and before making such a decision I would want very much more detailed information and would wish to hear far more argument.

However, I am able to say to the House that while I am absolutely satisfied—as I am sure the House is—that the practice initially entered into by the government since the election was entirely in good faith—

I do not know whether I can say that about this case, but you could say it about the case which was before Speaker Jerome. Speaker Jerome went on to say:

—and while it may in fact be defensible against the argument of privilege of the House, I hope hon. members will understand that it is a rather dangerous practice to embark upon.

In the light of these circumstances, I think Speaker Jerome showed amazing foresight. If he were in the chair today, I respectfully suggest he would have difficulty saying that what was done was done in good faith, having before him a judgment of his own in 1979.

Speaker Jerome continued:

I refer to the practice of supporting from public funds a committee composed of members of any one caucus. In theory, I suppose, it is not likely that government funds would be used to support a single activity of an opposition caucus, but in any case that is no better.

This case goes much further than that. This goes right through to the theory. In fact, the theory has been justified on the coincidences here. Services and resources were given by the government to one caucus for it to prepare a position on a matter now before this House of Commons. It is an advantage given to one party by the government and not given to another.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Again, on December 10, 1979, at page 2180, the Speaker said:

The support of public funds, where applied to parliamentary activities, ought, I think, to apply across the floor of Parliament, particularly—

And Speaker Jerome concludes his sentence by saying this:

—the provision of funds for researchers for individual caucuses.