

privilege, but this is all hearsay and allegations. None of it comes from the Hon. Member who is allegedly complaining, reasonably quickly, I might add, for a Member—I am not suggesting he was not in the Chamber, I just suggest it is not the Member himself bringing the point of privilege.

Second, I find it rather strange that we as Government are continually beset by “a leaked document”, “a brown envelope”. My goodness, we did the same when we were over there. They are the fare of the Opposition.

Mr. Keeper: You know it was a brown envelope?

Mr. Lewis: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, this may have come to our attention through a brown envelope, just as the Hon. Member from Yorkton, with a grin from ear to ear, always has brown envelopes. I am sorry, is the “brown envelope” routine only good when it goes one way?

Mr. Keeper: Did it come in a brown envelope?

Mr. Lewis: Is it only good one way? It is like Standing Order 96(2); they only want a committee to study something when it suits them. When we want a committee to study something, it does not suit them.

● (1520)

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, there is no question of privilege. I say that because it was not brought by the Member who is alleging a question of privilege.

Mr. John Gormley (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I thought I may be able to offer a few words, I hope, to assuage the concerns of the Whip of the New Democratic Party—

Mr. Angus: Thank you for the demotion!

Mr. Gormley: I am sorry, I have either promoted or demoted him. I am referring to the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan (Mr. Angus) who raised the question of privilege.

First, I concur with what the Minister has said. I think it would be more appropriate if the question of privilege were brought by the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon (Mr. Epp), a copy of whose correspondence I spoke about in the House today.

I would like to clarify, Sir, that I did not in my statement to the House refer to when the letter was received. I simply said that the letter was dated today.

With respect to one's own office security and one's own privileges, because we have not heard from the Member who wrote the letter, I think that the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan who has raised the point may have inadvertently caused a great deal of concern about the actual security of a Member's own office. That, indeed, would be a very serious charge. I would like to at this point state unequivocally that this matter has nothing to do with the security of one's

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own office being breached, as in the case of one having entered an office surreptitiously to obtain a document. That is clearly not the case.

Mr. Keeper: Where did you get it from?

Mr. Gormley: Where did I get this letter? That is the question held by many concerned New Democrats.

I am delighted to share with the House that the tradition of leaking documents, that citizens consider odious and obnoxious in content and against the principles of Parliament, is alive and well. The document came into my hands as a result of someone who felt that the Government should make public correspondence that the NDP is issuing and, might I add as well, using the House of Commons printing service which is paid for by the taxpayers of Canada, as well as the the frank, something which we all take very seriously.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to the comments of the Hon. Members. I believe that this is a matter which affects all Hon. Members. There are one or two scenarios which are possible, given the comments by the Hon. Member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake that this letter was not obtained directly from the Member's office, that is, the office of the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon. There are only two sources by which the document could have been obtained.

The first is that employees of the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon could have sent to the Hon. Member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake a brown envelope. The second possibility is, an employee of the House of Commons who is involved in the process of taking documents from a Member's office to the printing service where they are printed and then returned. This letter has not been mailed out yet. It has not gone beyond the precincts of Parliament. Those are the only two options.

My colleague, the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon, is not here. He is in his riding. However, he is paying attention right now I am sure in front of a television.

I believe that the matter is important enough, Mr. Speaker, that you should review the situation to determine if there has been a breach of privilege. If the privilege of the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon has been breached within the confines of the House of Commons, as a result of the actions of employees who are charged with the responsibility of serving Members in a non-partisan way, then I think it is very important that Your Honour examine the issue and report back to the House. I am not talking about a government department in which a disgruntled employee believes that the Opposition needs certain information. I am talking about employees of the House of Commons who are charged with the responsibility of serving Members in a non-partisan way.

Mr. Speaker: I will consider carefully the representations of Hon. Members. I have some doubt as to whether this is really a question of privilege. However, I am concerned about the