

Privilege—Mr. W. Baker

always given the opportunity to make an application to make the difference of opinion or difference of interpretation involved, known. When that is put forward it seems only just that equal contributions ought to be made from the other side. That has been done.

It is not essentially a question of privilege; it is a question of disagreement and interpretation. Furthermore, it has been contributed to by two members of the opposition at considerable length, and it seems to me that the matter, which does not in the first instance constitute a question of privilege, ought to close.

MR. BAKER (GRENVILLE-CARLETON)—TAPE RECORDINGS OF MINISTER'S REMARKS

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I am rising, then, on what I must say is a new question of privilege. I attempted to get to my feet just as Your Honour rose, and I did not want to interrupt you. Your Honour has now dealt with the matter in such a way that it has been passed off as a matter of dispute and difference between both sides. I cannot question Your Honour's ruling but, with respect, I think it goes much further than that. Therefore I rise on a new question of privilege with respect to what the minister said.

Your Honour has heard quoted—and I am going to quote again—what has been recorded in a transcript of a recording of the minister's speech which was obtained. The tapes are available. The minister has the transcript, and it is clear. I am sure the tapes will substantiate that the minister stated a certain opinion that has been laid before this House clearly by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) and by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). However, the opposite is true in terms of her statement yesterday. I think we have to put this in the context of her statements here in the House as a member of parliament who, incidentally, is a minister of the Crown.

The minister yesterday stated the following:

... I need only add that I have always supported the work and actions—particularly with regard to the current parliamentary crisis...

How can that possibly be squared with what the minister said at Carleton University? It is on the record. Then the minister said:

... and, naturally, the right hon. Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau). Even now, in my office, I am in the process of writing a telegram to the newspapers the *Toronto Sun* and *The Charlatan* setting the record straight.

That is what the minister said she was in the process of doing. If Your Honour wishes, I can read the whole statement. I do not think I have to, but there is an absolute difference between the position the minister took at Carleton University, which has been recorded, and the position she took yesterday in the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will let the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) go on in a minute. There are others who wish to contribute to the point. I will hear the acting Prime Minister, who is prepared to make a contribution as well. However, the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton

[Mr. Speaker.]

must be able to persuade me that a prima facie question of privilege exists. What he has just said may be true, upon which I would be prepared to hear argument; but supposing there is a direct contradiction between what the minister said at Carleton University and what she said in the House does that constitute a question of privilege?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I appreciate your intervention, Mr. Speaker, but what the minister said of the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) had to do with what he said regarding her statement at Carleton University. She said that the hon. member had made unfounded serious allegations. That is in the paragraph preceding what I have already read. I was just coming to that before Your Honour rose. It is at page 692 of *Hansard*. I do not know how that can be squared with what the minister said at Carleton University. I do not think this can be brushed off gently as an issue simply to be contributed to by both sides.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: This is an abuse of the House.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I cannot talk over the din from the other side.

I think this matter is important on another ground. The minister is a member of this parliament. If the minister has been wronged by *The Charlatan* at Carleton, which she claims she has been, then she and other members of parliament have the right to have the matter cleared. If the transcript of the statement, alleged to have been made from the taping of the voice of a minister of the Crown, is not a true record of what the minister said, or if the voice on the tape is not that of the minister, who is a member of this House, then that member ought to be given the benefit of the doubt and every opportunity to clear herself.

Therefore, in view of the failure of the minister to move a motion, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggan (Mr. Hnatyshyn):

That the question of privilege raised by the Minister of National Health and Welfare be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

I do this so that the matter can be aired completely.

Mr. Speaker: At the outset I must indicate that I have made an adjudication on the merits of the question raised by the minister. I have previously indicated—and I will draw the precedents before finalizing—that it is not in keeping with the precedents of our House that one member can raise a question of privilege to be sent to a committee regarding the grievance of another member. That has never been done. In any case, I will reserve on the matter, examine the precedents, and rule on the present argument by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton.

Hon. John C. Munro (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I should like to comment on this spurious question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker). Even if there was a contradiction between what