

I raised this problem in the House yesterday, July 2, since I felt my doing so would lend support to the hon. member for Leeds-Grenville (Mr. Cossitt) in his submission, on a question of privilege, that members of Parliament were not treated equally vis-à-vis members of the government party. Since I feel that the discharge of my responsibility to my constituents is severely hampered by my not receiving these lists, it is evident that the raising of a question of privilege is in order.

I should like to recapitulate in two sentences. First, notification that the lists would not be made available to me was received and, second, a nil report for my electoral district was received from the Secretary of State, though I received a list of 53 persons who had obtained citizenship certificates in May—and I obtained that list through another means.

● (1510)

Here comes the moment of truth, Madam Speaker. Arriving at my office early this morning in an unstamped envelope was the list of new Canadians, received 17 hours after I raised this concern in the House. I ask you, Madam Speaker, what benefit is served by sending out congratulatory letters to new citizens, as other members of Parliament in this House did in June, for those receiving their citizenship in May? What benefit is it to me, a Conservative member of Parliament in Peterborough, to congratulate my new Canadian citizens three or four months after their receipt of citizenship?

The list which I received was received from the clerk of the citizenship court, and I have it to turn in to *Hansard*. It is a list of citizens, minus addresses, and it is of no use to me as a member of Parliament in sending out congratulatory messages.

The law of privilege in this regard is stated in Erskine May, the nineteenth edition, on page 136, and I quote:

It may be stated generally that any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence.

More specifically, under the heading "Presenting Forged, Falsified or Fabricated Documents to either House or committees of either House", May goes on to say:

It is a breach of privilege to present or cause to be presented to either House or to committees of either House forged, falsified or fabricated documents with intent to deceive such House or committees or to subscribe the names of other persons or fictitious names to documents intended to be presented to either House or committees of either House, or to be privy to, or cognizant of, such forgery or fraud.

That appears in the nineteenth edition at page 141. At the same page May deals with conspiracy to deceive either House or committees or members of either House as follows:

It has already been seen that the giving of false evidence, prevarication or suppression of the truth by witnesses while under examination before either House or before committees of either House is punished as a contempt; and that persons who present false, forged or fabricated documents to either House or to committees of either House are guilty of a breach of privilege. Conspiracy to deceive either House or any committees of either House will also be treated as a breach of privilege.

Privilege—Mr. Domm

A minister is expected either to assume responsibility for actions of his ministry or, alternatively, to advise the House of the appropriate disciplinary measure which has been taken.

On December 6, 1978, the former Speaker of the House, the Hon. James Jerome, as recorded at page 1856 of *Hansard* for that date, stated:

Does that lead us to the conclusion that, by virtue of an act or omission, the House, or a member, has directly or indirectly been impeded in the performance of its functions or his duty, or that there has been a tendency to produce such result? If I so find, then I really have no choice but to find, prima facie, that a contempt has been committed.

I can interpret that testimony in no other way than meaning that a deliberate attempt was made to obstruct the member in the performance of his duties and, consequently, to obstruct the House itself.

Speaker Jerome went on further to say, and I quote:

Even beyond the precedents and the complex law of privilege, I cannot conceive that there is any one of us who would accept the argument that this House of Commons has no recourse in the face of such an attempt to obstruct by offering admittedly misleading information.

I, therefore, find a prima facie case of contempt against the House of Commons.

It must be obvious as a result of the concession in committee by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin), as referred to today in a motion under Standing Order 43, that all members should be treated equally. All members should receive notices of New Horizons grants at the time one side does. Not to have that motion passed in this House unanimously by both sides indicates that there is obviously an intention on the part of hon. members opposite to mislead, misrepresent and keep the opposition ill informed and unable properly to perform the duties which they were elected to perform.

I would further like to point out that rather suspiciously this morning a letter addressed to all Liberal members of Parliament arrived at my office. In that letter it says that as a Liberal member of Parliament I could object to any of the New Horizons programs approved for my area. Attached to that letter—which I have here—are two programs approved, and I assume that if I had been a Liberal member of Parliament, I might have received it at the same time as Liberal members opposite.

In conclusion, I would like to ask for one basic consideration. If Your Honour finds that I have a prima facie question of privilege, I would like to have the opportunity to move, seconded by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker), the following:

That this matter of discriminatory treatment of a member of Parliament by the Department of the Secretary of State, through the issuance of false documents by the department to the member for Peterborough and through the misuse of the citizenship courts for political purposes, be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Thank you for your kind consideration, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds-Grenville): Madam Speaker, I rise to comment briefly on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm). I feel it can be said that this is a further shocking example of an arrogant government interfering with the privileges of a member of this