

**Mr. Clark:** It is among the things that she does not have in her hand.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

● (1510)

**Mr. Clark:** Two points arise here. One has to do with the fact that there appears to be an established practice within this government of consulting not with all members of the House of Commons but simply with Liberal members of the House of Commons regarding policies and practices which affect the citizens represented in this chamber not simply by Liberals but by members from all political parties. That is one aspect, and that practice is clearly wrong on the face of it; it is a matter which, in my judgment, deserves serious consideration as a question of privilege by a committee of the House.

The other matter, almost as dangerous, as was indicated by my hon. friend when he raised this point, is that we appear to have here, over the authority of the signature of a minister of the Crown, a secret veto system which allows Liberal members, presumably for Liberal party purposes, since it was sent only to Liberal members, to veto, to cancel, and to undermine New Horizons programs, grants which might have been made on the basis of merit, because they might not accord with the partisan interests of the Liberal Party of Canada. That is a totally unacceptable procedure and we should not allow the Minister of National Health and Welfare to suggest that this is a practice which could somehow be condoned because there have been other instances in which there has been open consultation with members on both sides of the House. This is a case which is clearly distinct from those other instances. It is distinct because the opportunity for consultation was confined to members of the Liberal party, and it is distinct because there is a clear request, a clear invitation from the minister's officials to Liberal members of Parliament, to have decisions which might have been made for reasons of merit undercut and undermined for reasons of Liberal partisan politics.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River):** Madam Speaker, I should like to add one point to this discussion and suggest it would be even more a question of privilege if this veto is to be applied by the Liberal twin members of members who are elected by the people to the Progressive Conservative Party or the New Democratic Party. The Liberal party has taken upon itself the totalitarian concept of appointing a member to represent a constituency in western Canada, and if that member is now going to be able to veto applications from senior citizens in the twin ridings it would, indeed, be a catastrophe.

**Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood):** Madam Speaker, the critical question, it seems to me, is not that members of Parliament have been advised that New Horizons projects were taking place in their ridings or that projects would be approved on a certain date; the critical question is that members on the government side are given an advantage, or appear

to be given an advantage, or may have been given an advantage which other members have not.

May I refer you, Madam Speaker, to a precedent in the last Parliament? My hon. friend from Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) raised the question of partisan political committees formed by the party which was then in power to study particular questions, committees to which a budget was allocated by the government of that day and to which members of opposition parties had no access.

As I say, the critical question seems to be whether advantages are being given to Liberal members of Parliament which are not open to other members. If so, precisely what are they? If they are being given an advantage, I would suggest that on the precedent of a ruling given in that case by Mr. Speaker Jerome, it appears to me the privileges or rights of members on this side are being prejudiced in their ability to represent their constituents in the same way as Liberal members are able to do so.

Quite apart from partisan bickering back and forth, if there is an advantage being given to Liberal members which is not given to others, there is unfairness involved and it is a practice which should stop—not by cutting off information from members of Parliament but by saying to all members, "If you have a reasoned objection to a particular proposal, the minister would like to discuss it with you in a reasoned way". It would not be a case of a member having an absolute veto over something which does, or does not go on, in his or her riding. I should like to hear from the minister on this question because it seems to me we all need to be enlightened as to exactly what is the government's practice.

**Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough):** Madam Speaker, when ruling on this question of privilege I should like you to take into consideration a matter which has been brought to my attention in the riding of Peterborough recently. It has long been the practice among all members of Parliament to send out congratulatory letters to new Canadian citizens as they receive their citizenship certificates. I should like to bring it to the attention of the House that a directive went out two weeks ago—and I would remind you, Madam Speaker, that Peterborough is no longer represented by a Liberal—to the citizenship office opened by the former Liberal member and minister in Peterborough advising the office of citizenship that it was no longer to send a list of new Canadians who received their citizenship in Peterborough to the present Conservative member of Parliament in the city of Peterborough.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** Madam Speaker, I find it amazing that the opposition is criticizing the minister for consulting members of her own party without, of course, shirking in any way the responsibility for making all her own decisions. Criticizing the minister for consulting her colleagues seems to me not only unacceptable, but most amazing if we consider how the Con-