

Privilege—Mr. Cooper

comparing it with a good many previous questions of privilege raised in this Parliament, it is one of the most substantial and serious that has been raised thus far. No other Members have participated in the conflict that exists between the Minister and the Member, both of whom are entitled to be believed on the basis of their status as Members of the House of Commons. Clearly the conflict should not be resolved by the Chair. That is what urges me to submit to you that this is a very proper question to be put to the House, and it should be.

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I heard only the concluding remarks of the House Leader of the Opposition. One thing strikes me in his remarks, he seems to be talking about a conflict between the Hon. Member and the Minister. There is no conflict between the Member and myself. The Hon. Member alleged in the House that his privileges had been breached as a result of a telephone conversation with an employee of the Canada Post Corporation. I enquired and it would seem that he did not speak directly to that Canada Post employee. Consequently, his whole question of privilege is based on the remarks of a third party which were conveyed to him. In other words, his so-called question of privilege is based on hearsay and that is why I do not see it as a matter of privilege. It is more a question of disagreement between parties, as happens regularly in the House when Members on either side do not see eye to eye. I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that is a matter of disagreement rather than a question of privilege.

[English]

Mr. Paul Dick (Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I want to intervene only very briefly in this matter. Because this matter arose and it did appear to be the closest I have seen to real privilege, I did some reading.

You cannot, of course, be asked to make a decision of fact in this matter. We have been hearing hearsay. If you think there is a *prima facie* case, that is the very reason it should be sent to the committee for it to decide. It strikes me it is very much like a preliminary hearing. It is not for the judge at a preliminary hearing to decide the facts. From the evidence which he hears he has to decide whether there is sufficient concern to send the matter on for a proper trial. This is the same as the historical reasoning for having grand juries. Only one side ever presented its facts in front of a grand jury. A grand jury never tried the facts.

It seems to me that you have been given some information which is hearsay. You cannot decide on the basis of hearsay. I do not believe you can decide that there is a dispute between the Members because there is not really a dispute between the Members. The matter arises before that. I believe the allegation in existence is one which would derogate from the privilege of a Member of Parliament. I do not feel it can be decided in this Chamber.

If there is a sufficient basis, from all the reading I have done I think the proper way to handle it is to get it out of the

Chamber and into a committee where a decision can be made based on the facts by calling the various people themselves. The committee will have evidence from the people who are directly involved rather than hearsay. I hope you will find so.

Mr. Speaker: It is the intention of the Chair to review the record carefully and reserve decision for the moment.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 62—NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION—
JOB-CREATION POLICY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Riis:

That this House condemns the government for:

1. employing corporate tax handouts to produce business profits without any guarantees that such tax benefits would result in new investment or job creation;
2. increasing the tax burden on Canadians at the very time when more stimulus is needed in the economy; and
3. allocating job-creation funds in a partisan fashion not based upon local employment levels.

And the amendment of Mr. McGrath:

That the motion be amended by deleting the period after the words "levels" and adding the following thereafter:

"instead of focusing on job-creation programs open to all eligible Canadians, such as career access and refundable employment tax credits".

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before two o'clock, we are debating a New Democratic Party motion today on our so-called allotted Opposition Day on which it is the function of the Opposition Parties to raise grievances with respect to Government policies. The New Democratic Party has finally decided to train its weapons on the Government for a change.

We are supportive of this resolution with respect to the confidence of the Government for a number of reasons. If there were any doubt with respect to the cynicism with which the Government benchers have dealt on this particular issue, there can be no doubt now. Government Members are equally as guilty as the Liberal Cabinet. During the course of Question Period every Liberal back-bencher was smirking, hooting and hollering approval of the cynical misuse of public funds. The people of Canada will not forgive this approbation they have given to the activities of a dying Government in its dying days.

It is not often that I join with the New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker. I try to help them when they are right. There are three things which are certain in life. One is death, the second is taxes, and the third is that the NPD will be 15 per cent in the Gallup poll. These are the three certainties of life. Notwithstanding, I am going to stand by my colleagues to the left, carry on and try to support this particular motion, which is a serious one.