Privilege

that building has to be evacuated or whether they in fact should continue to work in it in order to carry out their duties.

Perhaps the only alternative is to shut the building down and either have MPs find alternative accommodation and submit the bills to the House of Commons, or the House should consider immediately whether or not we can find them alternative accommodation.

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate the intervention of the hon. member. I also appreciate the fact that I had notice of his question of privilege. The matter has been brought back to the House. I think it is now appropriate for the Board of Internal Economy to proceed as we are.

I will take into account the particular matters raised by the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

ACCESS TO RESEARCH FACILITIES

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I rise again today on a question of privilege concerning a serious and important matter that should be worthy of your attention and give you cause to reflect.

Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago, I raised a question of privilege about access to research facilities. Mr. Speaker, there have been new developments since then, and I think it falls very much within the purview of this institution to be aware of certain events outside the House that have a considerable impact on the privileges of all members. I am referring to the fact that the services of research staff on the House of Commons payroll have now been made available to individuals in the private sector.

Let me explain, Mr. Speaker. I was astonished to read in the *Montreal Gazette* on Wednesday, November 28, that two members of this House, the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel and the hon. member for Outremont, had decided to make available free of charge the research facilities of their parties, and probably their personal staff, to people in the private sector. I would like to quote, Mr. Speaker, from the article signed by Philippe Authier, which reads as follows:

[*English*]

They have agreed to share researchers and newspaper clipping services.

[*Translation*]

There is more, Mr. Speaker. This group of members of the business community includes Marcel Beaudry, an eminent Hull lawyer, Sheryl Campbell–Steer, vice–president of the Montreal Board of Trade, Charles–Albert Poissant, president of Donahue, and Sébastian Allard, of the Conseil du patronat du Québec.

[*English*]

Each has been assigned an aide to sort through briefs and prepare questions. The help comes courtesy of Ouellet and Hogue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I am astonished to see that public funds are now made available to individuals in the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a serious matter when one sees a resident of Hull, Mr. Marcel Beaudry, given access to research services while the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer, who was elected by the people of Hull—Aylmer, is denied access to the same public funds to do his research.

Mr. Speaker, I think you should take a long, hard look at this matter. For instance, tomorrow, the Liberal Party, the Progressive Conservative Party or the New Democratic Party might decide that they support the principles of the Conseil du patronat or the FTQ and decide to transfer their staff to these organizations. Mr. Speaker, I hardly think this is in accordance with the Standing Orders and practices of this House. All the more so since it amounts to discrimination with respect to our political convictions, realizing as we do that we have been denied these privileges, whereas citizens who have not been elected by anybody and who sit on the boards of major corporations are given access to research services paid for by the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, I refer you to another article published in *La Presse* of that same day where it is alleged that the group pools their resources and their staff and that from here on in they will follow a specific strategy where somebody would suggest such or such question to the witnesses just to make sure that all bases are covered. And, according to Mr. Ouellet, there is nothing wrong with that kind of arrangement.