

Privilege—Mr. Broadbent

Mr. Speaker: Order. The minister has raised a rather narrow question of privilege which relates to some allegations made earlier by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham. If there is to be further elaboration, perhaps it ought to be done by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham who is directly involved. For the moment, the matter should stand over. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby.

Mr. Clark: Sit down, Ouellet.

Mr. Ouellet: The opposition is afraid to listen to the truth.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby has the floor.

Mr. Ouellet: You are talking about bugging by the RCMP.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): You wouldn't know a bug if you fell over it.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If I am not able to hear the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby, I will have no choice but to adjourn the House.

MR. BROADBENT—ANSWERS GIVEN BY PRIME MINISTER
DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a different question of privilege concerning the answers given by the Prime Minister earlier in the question period. If I heard accurately—and I have checked with others—and if the Prime Minister did not make a slip of the tongue, we have a potentially serious contradiction of certain information which has been given to the House.

Mr. Gillies: What's new?

Mr. Broadbent: I was asking the Prime Minister about the request for information sent to Montreal by the then director general of security services, Mr. John Starnes, at the time of the break-in at L'Agence de Presse Libre, and the Prime Minister said—these are the words I recall—"Well, that request came in response to inquiries that had been made in the minister's office and in my office for a response to the break-in".

Now, if the Prime Minister said that—and I recall that he said that, and others beside me do—then that is new. In previous discussions we have had on this matter, very serious discussions indeed, late last spring, as Your Honour recalls we were informed that a request for information went to the then solicitor general, to the Montreal police and to the Quebec police.

● (1542)

Up to this point, if I recall correctly, it was assumed that the Prime Minister's office heard nothing about this break-in for many months; indeed, many years. I hope the Prime Minister will clear the record on this. Did he say that his office had

[Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton).]

been informed and was aware of the break-in shortly after it occurred? Did his office make a request of Mr. John Starnes to produce some kind of a written report on the break-in? If that is so, certainly it contradicts what I understood was the Prime Minister's previously stated position on this matter.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby raises a question of privilege which I presume will be contributed to by the Prime Minister at the first opportunity.

MR. POULIN—REMARKS OF PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF
JUSTICE

Mr. Hugh Poulin (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I know it has been a trying day for you and I do not intend to cause any more aggravation to you. I will try to be of some assistance on one of the matters referred to in the questions of privilege raised today.

The Leader of the Opposition has advised us of a second very serious criminal offence alleged to have been committed in the House of Commons. On Monday, the hon. member for Central Nova advised us of a very serious criminal offence which was committed here. I am referring to the bugging or the planting of listening devices in the offices of these two members. As the Minister of Justice stated, this involves far more than just the rights and privileges of the members of the House of Commons. It is a very serious allegation of a criminal offence having been committed. In the event that the culprit is found—and I hope he or she is—the style of cause would read: "Regina versus" whoever the accused person is. It would be the state against the individual.

The motion brought on earlier today by the hon. member for Spadina indicated that we all want to get to the bottom of this matter. It is my grave concern that this alleged criminal offence should not be dealt with any differently than any other criminal offence. For example, if there had been an assault in the office of an hon. minister or an hon. member which resulted in a homicide, none of us would be saying that we should wait until members decided whether it should be proceeded with; with dispatch, law enforcement officers would be asked to come in and conduct an investigation.

From Monday until now the trail has got cold. Perhaps some fingerprints have been lost and this type of thing. Because of the serious allegation made today by the Leader of the Opposition of another criminal offence, it is my suggestion that without further delay the Ottawa city police be called in to assist in this investigation, to ensure that all the evidence is uncovered in a most expeditious and professional way in relation to both these cases. It may well be that the Ottawa city police would request the assistance of the Ontario provincial police and its criminal investigation division and crime labs. Also, it may well be that they would request the most excellent assistance and advice of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Most of your constituents do not have converters.