

I will not go on and abuse the time of the House as the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton did in formulating his non-question of privilege, but I would also like to draw Your Honour's attention to the report of that committee which was tabled in this House on Friday, February 13, 1981. I find this under the heading "Organization of Committee's Work":

The resources of both Houses of Parliament and the Library of Parliament, as well as those of the Department of Justice, the Federal-Provincial Relations Office and other government departments, the Prime Minister's office—

My goodness, Madam Speaker, the members over there have really deviated from their normal behaviour in acknowledging any assistance from the Prime Minister's office, given their daily tirades in this House. I continue:

—and the Parliamentary Centre for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, were directed to the facilitation of the work of the committee.

There we have it, Madam Speaker. In dealing with the Constitution, we acknowledge the fact that members of the Conservative party themselves had technical assistance from advisers of the Department of Justice at those hearings. What is wrong with that? Indeed, my friend the hon. member for Calgary West agrees with my point. All I am saying is that any assistance required by any opposition member, whether of the NDP or the Conservatives, on any matter of government business had only to be requested.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think the hon. parliamentary secretary should distinguish between the preparation of amendments for bills and the preparation of official party documents for another party. That is what the argument is about.

● (1440)

Mr. Collette: It is awfully nice of the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) to make that suggestion to me but, as I was stating, if any member of this House wishes to ask the government for an opinion on any matter, whether it is through Order Paper questions or through a direct request to a minister, or even through questions asked in Oral Question Period, answers will be forthcoming.

If members of the Conservative Party wanted assistance in drafting their amendments because they did not have the ability to put into words what they really had in mind—I think this has been only too evident, judging by the statements made by various members of the official opposition who, at many times during this constitutional debate, have contradicted themselves and talked about one certain formula and one type of amendment—it only had to be requested. It was requested of the Department of Justice officials, and those officials complied.

What I am essentially saying is that this is not a question of privilege. First, the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) read from a newspaper article. The authenticity of that report has not been confirmed in any way, except the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) has said that he and his party have from time to time sought certain information from the government. If that information supports the position of that party, there is nothing wrong with that.

Privilege—Mr. W. Baker

Quite simply, for an hour and a half or more—I suppose almost two hours from twelve o'clock today—the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton stood and spoke about nothing and continued a systematic filibuster of the business of this House of Commons. This filibuster has brought this House of Commons to a standstill and frustrated the normal legislative deliberations of the House. It has frustrated the will of the people of Canada who have sent us here to legislate and govern on behalf of all Canadians. If this kind of filibuster and obstruction continues, only the people of Canada will be able to decide.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Collette: Only the people of Canada can decide in their very intelligent way. I must say that the people of Canada are much more intelligent and sophisticated than members of the official opposition give them credit for. This question of privilege and the other questions of privilege and delaying tactics we saw last night frustrate not only our normal business but also the will of the people of Canada. Furthermore, it is an insult to the intelligence of the very people who elected us to serve in this place. I think the people of Canada will condemn the official opposition for this outlandish turn of events.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: I have listened quite carefully despite—

Mr. Beatty: Madam Speaker, on the question of privilege—

Madam Speaker: Later.

An hon. Member: Throw him out.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I have listened to this question of privilege submitted by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton, and I must note a few things about his presentation and about the way I can look at it.

The hon. member did not allege that the article itself represented a breach of privilege but used it as evidence to sustain an allegation that a breach of privilege had occurred, to the extent that government services had been made available to the New Democratic Party but not to his own party, and that therefore public funds had been used by the New Democratic Party in preparation of a certain document.

Mr. Lawrence: That was admitted.

Madam Speaker: I must say that beyond the newspaper article itself no other evidence was offered to support the allegation—

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Except the admission.

Madam Speaker:—apart from the fact that the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton did identify the alleged author of that article. But beyond that we do not know anything else.