

These visitors were not harassing the post office. They were visiting an MP's office. In fact they came at my invitation to collect petitions which I had personally collected and which were sitting in my office, 2,000 of them.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister, if he was really concerned, should look at Section 381.1 of the Criminal Code with respect to following people with intent to intimidate. When people come to an MP's office in disguise, fearful that the office is being watched, I would suggest that it is a breach of privilege of a Member of Parliament. By extension, it intimidates those whom the Member of Parliament serves in that community.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin) on the same point.

**Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same question of privilege. There is no question that there is long standing precedent that nothing should be put between a Member of Parliament and his constituents, or no action should be taken that in anyway prohibits a Member of Parliament from carrying out his or her responsibilities, particularly any action which may be seen to originate directly or indirectly from a government decision.

While Members may choose today to find humour in the example brought to our attention by my colleague who has just spoken, the fact is that the kind of complaint the Member has brought to the attention of the House, affecting his privileges or the privileges of any Member, be it a Member on the government side or on the opposition side, is serious and ought to be treated seriously by all Members of the House of Commons. I know it will be treated seriously, as is always the case, by the Speaker.

I hope your decision today, Mr. Speaker, will be to investigate the facts to see if it can be established that there has been a systematic following of visitors or a systematic note-taking of visits or activities of any group of Canadians. Whether the Opposition agrees with that group or whether the Government agrees with that group, whether they espouse the views of some people in Parliament or the views of no one in Parliament, or if everyone in Parliament disagreed with the views of a particular group in this society who wanted to communicate with their Member of Parliament, we could still not condone anyone secretly watching this group, in effect providing an intimidation tactic which may dissuade that group from seeking to communicate with their Member of Parliament.

A serious question has been raised and I beseech the Speaker to investigate the facts. If there has been a systematic following or examination of any group in our Canadian society, if any group is interfering with the communication between any Member of Parliament on the side of Government or Opposition, and a constituent, I ask the Speaker to find that there has been a breach of privilege and take appropriate action.

*Privilege—Mr. Rodriguez*

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of State and Minister of State (Treasury Board)):** Mr. Speaker, in reply, I suggest it is quite obvious that there has been no interference with my hon. friend's privilege. There has been no interference with his ability to do his duties. If people were going to my hon. friend's office in disguise, we on this side can understand that. I think probably most people would prefer that. However, the real point of privilege here is a question that we on this side are asking ourselves, why has the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper) not been included in the argument on the question of privilege? He is the Canada Post critic for the New Democratic Party. We are all wondering whether he has been replaced.

**Mr. Benjamin:** It was not his office.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Whose office was watched?

**Mr. Lewis:** Why has the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre not been included? Has he been thrown out of office by the New Democratic Party? Perhaps we can find out exactly who the postal critic is.

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious point. What we have here is a question of privilege raised by the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez). He is a Member of Parliament whose office was under surveillance, and I stress "under surveillance" by employees of the federal Government whose salaries are paid and whose expenses, I assume, are paid by the taxpayers of Canada. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to take a very serious look at whether or not is an infringement of the privileges of a Member of Parliament if one's office is under surveillance, a fact which can intimidate people from going to that office in a free and open manner. I think that is the point.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before I hear from other Members, the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) has made the suggestion that certain employees of the Post Office who wished to see him were at least followed, or under some kind of surveillance, by other employees of the Post Office. The Hon. Member for Nickel Belt says this is an interference with his privileges because this makes it more difficult for him to do his duty as a Member of the House of Commons. That is the point at issue.

Obviously, the Speaker, at least at this moment, has no means whatsoever of determining what the facts are except to accept with obvious generosity, at least, the side of the story the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt brings to the Speaker. Unless other Hon. Members in this Chamber also happened to be clustered around the Hon. Member's riding office at that particular moment, I do not need any more suggestions as to what happened. I certainly am prepared to hear the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) for a few minutes on the issue of privilege.