

which all of us are sorry; he is a fine member. He sits in the chair from time to time and, therefore, he can speak with some authority on these matters. At that time he talked about the expenditure of public funds by the then minister of transport, the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), to produce a paper known as the Neil report on railway abandonment. It was a job well done.

Our government, perhaps unwittingly, provided public funds for the preparation of a report by a member of our party. Those funds went to one party of the House of Commons, but they were denied to the New Democratic Party and to the Liberal Party. On that occasion great umbrage was taken by the Liberal Party and the NDP at the impropriety of it. This is precisely what we could be led to believe is happening now, and I want to argue why that is the case.

In any event, as reported at page 940 of *Hansard*, when dealing with the propriety of the subject matter, the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell said:

Moreover, the minister recognized that he had authorized the spending of public funds for the preparation and publication of a caucus committee report—

Today we are referring to a caucus committee report of the New Democratic Party. It stands in the name of the Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party. I am sure it was prepared with the knowledge and consent of the House leader of the NDP. At least, it was prepared with the knowledge and consent of those members of the NDP who support the government in the constitutional matter; I cannot say whether or not it was prepared with the knowledge and consent of those members of the NDP who do not support the constitutional matter.

**Mr. Knowles:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. How long is the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) permitted to indulge in this speech before establishing his question of privilege?

**Madam Speaker:** I must say that I am having some difficulty in recognizing the question of privilege.

**Mr. Chénier:** He does not know where he is going.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I am going through the article quoted; I am trying to find the statement of the hon. member. He opened his remarks by indicating that he would discuss the use of public funds when caucus funds should have been used, but he has not referred to it often in his remarks. I am still waiting for the hon. member to discuss that matter.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** I am coming to that, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Well, it has been a long time and the quotations have been lengthy. I ask the hon. member to come to the point more quickly.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Madam Speaker, I am surprised at the interjection of the hon. member.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

*Privilege—Mr. W. Baker*

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** In any event, I think it is important Your Honour understands that the question of privilege is that it is improper for government funds to be used to support a single activity of an opposition caucus, according to the ruling of the Hon. James Jerome on December 10, 1979. This is my question of privilege.

**Mr. Waddell:** Then sit down.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** I am doing my best to develop my question of privilege, but I am being subjected to the catcalls of the New Democratic Party and the interruptions of its House leader who does not want to hear the truth.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** I will present my question of privilege as quickly as I can, but it is important to know what was said by members of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party which led to the judgment of the then Speaker of the House of Commons.

The following was said by the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell:

Moreover, the minister recognized that he had authorized the spending of public funds for the preparation and publication of a caucus committee report, as well as made use of government facilities such as telephones, news releases, contacts and what have you, not to mention the services of public service employees—

**Mr. Chénier:** We have already heard that.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** At that time the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell said that it was improper. This is the issue here. Then the member went on to deal with the matter by saying:

In specific terms, that group of five, that caucus committee, is really a political committee—

In that case he was referring to a "caucus committee"; in this case I am saying that there is no difference between a caucus committee and the entire caucus. He went on to say:

—a partisan committee. When we look up the word "caucus" in Harrap's dictionary, we find the definition "political clique". That is precisely what I mean when I say it may not and must not be financed by taxpayers' money.

It is up to the House, and ultimately the committee, to establish it; I just have to establish a prima facie case. Then he went on to say:

—proves that my question of privilege is well founded and that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) could be called upon to appear before the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections to explain the propriety or legality, if you would rather, of those expenditures.

Then he complained because the document was in the course of translation and not available in French.

Then the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet), who was styled in the House at that time as the hon. member for Papineau, commented on the propriety of this procedure. All of us know that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs understands the House of Commons and the Standing Orders. As reported at page 942 of *Hansard*, on the very point I am raising now, he said: