

*Privilege—Mr. W. Baker*

the same time. I would have to dispose of one before I hear the next one. I understand the hon. member is speaking on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker).

**Mr. Broadbent:** Madam Speaker, I respect your authority and accept your judgment immediately. When you rule on the substance of the question of privilege, which should take all of ten seconds, I would be happy to raise a related question of privilege.

**Mr. D. M. Collenette (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Madam Speaker, I would like to contribute briefly to this question of privilege because I want to support some of the points just made by the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent). He states quite correctly that government departments in the normal course of business make documents and briefings available to the general public, the press, and that every member of this House can request certain information about them, whether through the Order Paper or a phone call to the minister's office. As the hon. member has outlined—and I was interested to hear his explanation—apparently his party, being in agreement with the substance of the resolution, sought some additional information from the government which apparently was made available.

Well, Madam Speaker, I submit there is no question of privilege outlined by my friend the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker). He alleged that certain privileged information was being made available to one party in this House which was denied all other parties. As the hon. member for Oshawa pointed out, if members of the Conservative Party would like to have any information on the government's position on this resolution, anything that might alter their up until now unalterable and inflexible position, then certainly that would be made available.

However, Madam Speaker, it works both ways. I ask your indulgence because I want to read a few extracts from the deliberations of the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution of Canada and its report. They will show that the kind of alleged behaviour that the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton objects to appears to me—and I stand to be corrected—to be the normal routine in this place and in committees, in the functioning of government, and in the give and take we have here.

I draw your attention to issue No. 56 of the proceedings of the committee, dated February 9, 1981, just before the committee adjourned. Senator Austin said:

I would recommend that we keep the staff that supports us at our steering committee meetings, and that we should also ask three officials of the Department of Justice to remain—Mr. Tassé, Miss MacDonald, and Mr. Bertrand.

**Mr. Epp then said:**

Mr. Chairman, I have no difficulty in terms of who the government wants. I would just like to suggest to honourable members that we be given the opportunity to decide who our staff members will be and that they be part of our delegation.

Then Mr. Epp said—

**Some hon. Members:** Order, order.

**Mr. Collenette:** Well, Madam Speaker, I am sorry—

**An hon. Member:** "The hon. member for Provencher".

**Mr. Collenette:** Madam Speaker, I know you left this question wide open. After suggesting to the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton that he follow my sensibilities—which are, incidentally, not based on personal pique but rather on the rules as I read them in Beauchesne and Erskine May—you allowed him to go on and break the rule. Nevertheless one should always follow one's own directive, and I apologize for having maligned the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) by calling him by his real name.

Senator Austin then said:

Well, I would leave it to Mr. Tassé to decide if there are any other officials from the Department of Justice that he thinks would be helpful.

Then the hon. member for Provencher, otherwise known as "you-know-who", said:

Mr. Chairman, if that point has now been determined, I think it is important, because this will be the last time, I take it, that we will be in public, that we thank publicly the people who have been here.

He was referring to Department of Justice officials, among other research staff. He continued:

On balance, Mr. Chairman, I very sincerely want to thank all these people, including the people from the Justice department.

I have mentioned them earlier, Mr. Chairman; but it has really been the first experience I have had where amendments we have moved as an opposition party were given additional and a great amount of help by people from the Justice department, who gave us of their professional abilities. I want to thank them for that.

**Mr. Hawkes:** Madam Speaker, I sat on that committee. Those services were available to all members of all parties, and I think that should be said at this point.

**Mr. Collenette:** Madam Speaker, my friend from Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes) is always at his most erudite when he states the obvious. That is the point I make in reading these extracts. The hon. member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) supported the hon. member for Provencher and said:

Rather than singling out all of the different people who have assisted us, I would simply like to say that I join with Mr.—

"You-know-who", the hon. member for Provencher:

—in thanking the many different people who have made the committee as effective as it has been.

Then Senator Austin said:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to clear up one point before we adjourn.

I was told that—

—the hon. member for Provencher—

—I am sure because of a misplaced word or two suggested that the officials of the Department of Justice whom I suggested ought to be here tomorrow in case we wanted them as resources, were government committee member designees.

I would like to place it on record that they are resource people for the committee and are not people I am suggesting should be here on our side in any partisan way.