

Privilege—Mr. Domm

answer. Madam Speaker, I think we are simply and obviously dealing with a confusion on facts.

I am more than willing to look into the matter that the hon. member raises on the facts, because it is merely a question of facts, and not of principle. There is no deliberate attempt to prevent hon. members from either side of this House from doing what they wish to do for new citizens. On the contrary, we encourage this type of initiative by making the name lists available to them. The only condition attached to the publication of these lists, Madam Speaker, is that under part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act, this constitutes a use of names that are in a federal data bank and these names cannot be used for any purpose other than welcoming these people in the great Canadian community.

[*English*]

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, if this matter was only a confusion of facts, then it could be disposed of quite easily by the Chair. But there is no confusion as to the facts; that is the difficulty.

The first clear and most important fact is the matter of the fabricated documents that were given to the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm). The Secretary of State (Mr. Fox) did not answer this, and it goes right to the heart of the question of privilege. The hon. member for Peterborough said that for the month of May he, as a member of Parliament, was given a list by the department which indicated on its face that there were no new Canadians for that particular month. That is a fabrication; that is a falsehood.

Mr. Fox: Maybe it was a mistake.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): It may or may not be a mistake.

Mr. Fox: We will look into it.

An hon. Member: You are making accusations.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): My friend cannot answer it today. As long as it is unanswered, then the citation on page 141 of May's still must be answered by Madam Speaker, that is, whether or not a member of the House was served with forged, falsified or fabricated documents. The minister did not answer it because he cannot. If he had said in certainty today that that was the case—

Mr. Fox: I have not seen the document.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): So that question is still outstanding. Of course, the rather unusual behaviour of suddenly finding the list under his door, which goes right to the heart of the truth of the statement, indicates shabby behaviour. I do not think the issue of privilege narrowly framed is with respect to shabby behaviour, but there is an issue with respect to whether or not that document was fabricated. If it was, then its presentation to a member of the House of Commons on the face of it raises a *prima facie* question of privilege, which is all Your Honour would be deciding now by

agreeing to allow the hon. member to put his motion. If we are to discuss privilege in narrow terms, that is the issue of privilege.

There is another side to this that was discussed yesterday with which I cannot deal and involving the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin). I do not know where members of Parliament are to turn if some assurance cannot be given to the House, through the first commoner of the House, that members of Parliament will be treated equally. The Secretary of State said that in so far as his department is concerned with respect to those citizenships, that is the policy of the department. Having given that undertaking, he is to see to its execution. I think someone over there who can speak for the government ought to give assurances on behalf of the government so that Madam Speaker can look after the rights and privileges of members of the House of Commons, as we look to you as the first commoner to do your job and to look after those rights. I hope I am speaking with respect when I say that it would not be inappropriate, even given Your Honour's ruling yesterday, to suggest that what occurred yesterday was out of keeping with the appropriate practice in the House of Commons and at the very least is something which should be frowned upon.

I do not want to detract from the question of privilege which I believe is still before Your Honour, that is, the whole matter of the truth and genuine quality of the documents received by the hon. member for Peterborough. That question has not been answered by the Secretary of State. I think the Secretary of State said he will look into it and he may look into it. If he is to look into it, then this whole matter should be reserved to let him do so. I say with respect that there ought to be no ruling today, while that investigation is proceeding, which would in any way take away the rights of the hon. member for Peterborough to have his question of privilege considered. Indeed it is not just a question for the hon. member for Peterborough, although it is framed in those terms; it is a question for every one of us.

Those are the remarks I wanted to make. There is much more than just the narrow question of privilege at stake. I say with respect that if ever there was a case for reservation, today is one case, simply for the sake of the Secretary of State and notwithstanding the interests of other members of this House.

Mr. Fox: You are all heart.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

Miss Bégin: Madam Speaker, I think you will allow me to speak on the question of privilege through which it has been suggested that members of Parliament are not all treated equally in their capacity to discharge their responsibility as members of Parliament. I think this is exactly the point that was made by the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) and I do not understand why, when I rise to speak on the point which has been raised, the opposition is preventing me from expressing my opinion.