

*Oral Questions*MR. REID—POSSIBILITY OF CONVERSATION WITH  
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE OFFICIAL CONCERNING TAX  
CHANGE ON BOATS—REQUEST FOR NAME

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** I have a supplementary question for the parliamentary secretary. May I say, with respect, that I think the difference is pretty fundamental.

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** The parliamentary secretary is quoted in the press—and he may want to deny that, and part of what was said also—that he had “insider knowledge” which quite conceivably could be obtained only by a parliamentary secretary or a cabinet minister who had more direct access certainly than the rest of us have to Department of Finance officials. It seems to me that that is an important difference between people who sit in the House either as ministers or parliamentary secretaries, and people on this side of the House or backbenchers on the other side of the House. I should like to ask the parliamentary secretary if he had a direct conversation with what he would regard as a knowledgeable official in the Department of Finance on the subject under discussion. If so, would he give us the name of that official and the precise information that was given to him?

● (1450)

**Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I had no direct information at all and I think that should be perfectly clear. I also would mention that backbenchers on this side of the House often feel that backbenchers on the other side have more information on what the government is going to do than we on this side.

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

**Mr. Reid:** The other point that should be made perfectly clear is that in the discussions in the standing committee when we were talking about conflict of interest I referred to my actions as member of parliament for Kenora-Rainy River, making representations on behalf of constituents who elected me; it has been my experience that a parliamentary secretary carries no weight at all with the ministry in many cases, and no weight at all with a department in obtaining information. Indeed, the correspondence I have had with everybody on it—which is certainly going to be open—has been done on my personal stationery as a member of parliament and conversations, phone calls and whatnot were made as a member of parliament. I was not introduced and have never introduced myself in my discussions with officials at any time with the temporary title which I bear!

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

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

**Mr. Reid:** The Prime Minister informs me that the axe falls on September 15 when my appointment runs out! I want to emphasize again to the hon. member that nobody gave me any direct information. What I did have was the result of a series of conversations with officials in three departments who were all affected by this—Transport,

[Mr. Reid.]

National Revenue and Finance. All I was able to find out with certainty, was what I was listening to in the House of Commons, that the pressure was such that the government would have to move on this particular thing because it was so obviously unjust and did not apply.

**Mr. Broadbent:** A supplementary. If I understand the hon. member correctly he is saying that his insider information—that phrase has been used—and his concern about conflict of interest—a phrase he also used—is absolutely no different for him or any particular subject matter under discussion in his judgment than it is for any other member on this side of the House. If that is the point he is making, there are at least a number of us who might be skeptical about it. Would the hon. member provide to members of the House the names of the three departmental officials in the three different departments with whom he had conversations on this subject?

**Mr. Reid:** Mr. Speaker, on the subject of insider information, I think if members go back and read the testimony of the Committee on Privileges and Elections of March 6, 1975, the point I was making was that members of parliament, by their very nature, have inside information that is not available to the general public. I meant insider information only in that sense. Those of us involved in the governing process do have information which is not available to everybody in the community.

Concerning the names of officials, according to my files I have the name of only one official who was called, not by me, but by an officer in my employ and I am prepared to table in the House—if the House should wish it—a copy of the memorandum prepared for me by my staff which might be of some assistance. It is dated November 21, 1974.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the House agree that the President of the Privy Council shall be in a position to table that memorandum?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## INCOME TAX

ALLEGED REFUSAL OF MINISTER TO GIVE RECEIPT FOR  
DONATION TO POLITICAL PARTY

**Mr. René Matte (Champlain):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Revenue but since he is behind the curtains, I will ask the parliamentary secretary, unless the Minister of National Revenue is willing to resume his seat. He is back.

Now, I would like to know pursuant to which act the minister may deny a taxpayer the amount of an official receipt which has been issued by an officer registered in a political party according to the law, and thus prejudice his right by refusing the immediate and total tax refund to which he is entitled?

[English]

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, this is really in the nature of a legal question