

and, by so doing, breached the privileges of individual Members of the House of Commons of Canada.

**Madam Speaker:** I hope Members will allow me a brief intervention because I do want this debate to advance. I think we all agree, as the Right Hon. Member just indicated, about secrecy and the oaths which are quite sacred matters; there is no discussion on that. What the Chair needs to have demonstrated is that the secrecy of the budget and these oaths are related to the privileges of the House. It is very important that Members focus on that particular point. It is not enough to say that some Ministers of Finance or Chancellors of the Exchequer have resigned because a secret in the budget had been divulged. That is not sufficient. It needs to be demonstrated that they resigned in relation to a matter having to do with the privileges of the House.

These Ministers of Finance having resigned, I remind Hon. Members, they remained Members of the House of Commons without the House having imposed on them any kind of sanction. Members should be reminded that the privileges of the House are applied not to Ministers but to Members exclusively, not to Members in their capacity as Ministers but to Members of the House of Commons. In this respect they are all equal. It is very important that Members should focus on this in their interventions.

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Madam Speaker, this is a sad day for Canada and a sad day for Parliament. It is sad for the country because if ever there was a time when economic leadership was required to deal with the real problems of our land, it is today. It is sad for Parliament because we have a Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) who has violated his oath as a Member of the Privy Council. In so doing, he has also violated our privileges as Members of the House and so undermined completely, I regret to say, in the context of what is going on in the country today, his capacity to provide the economic leadership that is so much required.

I want to deal with the essence of the question that Your Honour just raised. You have correctly said that what is at the root of the motion is the question of the privileges of the Members of the House. What has to be done at this stage is for the House, those of us who are expressing concern about this matter, to establish a prima facie case that our privileges have been violated.

It has been demonstrated beyond question that the Minister has violated his oath as a Minister of the Crown. That is clearly the case. The question of that matter's relationship to our privileges as Members of the House is what I want to underline in a very brief but accurate fashion.

Surely one of the basic privileges of a Member of the House, whether on this or the other side, as long as they are not Ministers of the Crown—I am talking about every Member in his or her capacity as a Member of Parliament—which we have over other Canadians is the privilege of hearing first from the Minister of Finance what is in his budget. That is an ancient privilege of the House, existing in Great Britain and in

*Privilege—Mr. Nielsen*

Canada. It is a privilege that I submit the Minister of Finance violated last night.

● (1240)

In a back-handed way I tell the Government House Leader, through you, Madam Speaker—I am addressing my argument to you in this context—that the Minister gave one of the most specious arguments I have ever heard in this House—

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** —when he tried to suggest that the case that has been made by Opposition Members about the budget leak can not really be judged at this point because we do not have a budget. That is just complete and utter hogwash.

As has already been indicated, the Minister of Finance last night on television said: "Here is the budget; here it is". He has not denied that since. He did not come to the House, nor did the Government House Leader whose words I listened to with care. The Government House Leader did not say that what the Minister of Finance revealed was not the budget. Even if we have not had a formal budget presented before us, all the evidence indicates that what the Minister of Finance said last night clearly illustrated to the whole of this nation what the budget will be. Whatever specious argument the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard) offers to the contrary, no one, except perhaps some of his own backbenchers, will agree with his argument.

The Minister of Finance went on television last night and said: "Here is the budget." He revealed to the television cameras, and therefore to the nation, before revealing to Members of the House the contents of the budget. The case, I think, is as simple as that. That is the privilege that has been violated. We have the right and the privilege as Members of the House to hear that budget first. The Minister of Finance, whatever the motive for his indiscretion may have been, made a grievous error for which he should be paying at this point.

I conclude by observing that I believe beyond question that the evidence of a prima facie case of the violation of our privileges is there. I will not repeat that evidence. I do want to say that before this day is out and before much time passes, the Minister of Finance should do the honourable thing and submit his resignation, because the evidence and the tradition is overwhelmingly against what he has done.

I conclude by saying what I began with. It is a sad day for this country when we do not get the economic leadership that we require. It is a sad day for Parliament when a Minister has bungled so obviously and has not, up to this moment, submitted his resignation.

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

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West):** Madam Speaker, persistence has its own merit, and I appreciate being recognized.

I have listened with interest to the very compelling arguments put forward by my colleagues from the Opposition