

*Alleged Tax Reform Propaganda*

booklets provided quite a good explanation of the law that had been passed. But certainly one could have complained at that time had the booklets been printed and distributed before the Canada Pension Plan had been approved by Parliament.

The narrow issue here is whether the government can use public funds to put its own side of the case and nobody else's. The same principle applies whether it be the publication of a white paper or the introduction of a bill. I support the arguments which have been advanced in favour of the motion, if accepted by Your Honour, put forward by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take too much time in this debate on the motion introduced by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), but I want to say that I would have preferred it if, before preparing color slides on the white paper on tax reform, the officials of the Department of Finance had seen to it that enough copies of this document had been printed to supply the needs of every hon. member.

Last week I brought to the attention of the House that we did not have enough copies of the white paper. To inform the public, on all aspects of the tax reform, the government should not distribute slides that represent only a part of the truth, but should make sure first that there are enough copies of the white paper for businessmen as well as a number of officials who are in a position to study every aspect of it.

I support the motion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre because, having the white paper in hand, businessmen are able to study the report and to express some criticism to the Department of Finance.

This is why the minister should have had first a sufficient number of copies printed and made available to citizens, especially to hon. members so that they might study it on their own and be able to give answers to inquirers instead of trying to sell his policy.

As a matter of fact, I think that he will need salesmen after the Constitutional Conference if he wants to have the policy set out in the white paper adopted.

These were, Mr. Speaker, the few remarks that I wanted to make.

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

*[English]*

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has followed the old practice of governments; whenever you have a weakness you attack some phony issue.

**Mr. Benson:** It is a phony issue.

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

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** No one in this House is suggesting for one moment that we should not have the fullest possible discussion all across Canada of the white paper on tax reform. No one is suggesting that there should not be public debate or that there should not be opportunities for people to gather all the information they can. That information surely ought to be disseminated by political parties and by groups interested in the contents of the white paper. The white paper is a subject for discussion all across this country. Those who are for it or against it have a responsibility to place their views before the public in order to allow the various economic groups in Canada which will appear before the parliamentary committee that will be discussing this document the opportunity of presenting their views. No one is objecting to the fullest possible participation in the democratic process. What we are objecting to is the government's use of public funds to propagate its own ideas before these matters have become legislation.

**Mr. Benson:** What about the white paper itself?

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** The white paper is not legislation.

**Mr. Benson:** It is going to result in legislation.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** If the minister is now taking the position that the moment the government introduces either a white paper or a piece of legislation it can then use the taxpayers' money to build up support for its proposals, then we have started down a very dangerous course.

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

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

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Is this to be the thin edge of the wedge? Is it to be the case that every time a