

Privilege

tion in substance, that there is no apology to speak of. I also believe that the malicious intent to which the parliamentary secretary referred yesterday has serious implications for all members of this House. That malicious intent, if it exists, is still not resolved, and I feel that the failure to examine this matter leaves a public cloud over the integrity of every member of this House, if not of parliament itself.

I also point out that in statements made in this House and in letters tabled there appear to be certain conflicts of evidence. I refer specifically to a letter that was tabled by the parliamentary secretary in which he stated:

I have spoken to the Department of Finance officials as well as the minister, and I understand they are likely to relieve the excise tax against boats, although not on motors.

That letter is dated December 19, more than a month before the actual amendment removing the tax was introduced on January 28 of this year. On questioning, however, we find that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) is relatively indecisive whether he ever discussed this matter specifically with the parliamentary secretary, and I would say that he was indecisive whether any departmental official was involved.

I would also point out that in the statements made by the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner) today there seem to be certain conflicts with the subsequent statements made by the parliamentary secretary concerning evidence and statements made and given to the Secretary of State either about pre-budget or pre-amendment leaks.

Having indicated those conflicts in certain statements, once again I would emphasize that this is surely a matter for the entire House to be concerned with. I believe that the only proper way of having the matter dealt with is by a reference to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. If Your Honour does not feel it in order to refer the matter in the context that the parliamentary secretary has requested it be referred, I would move, seconded by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath):

That the question of advance knowledge by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River, certain of his constituents and others of the January 28 amendment to the excise tax bill, and in particular the subject matter of the articles and editorial in the *Montreal Gazette* concerning the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River, published July 24 and July 25 of this year, be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, and that the committee sit at the earliest opportunity, have power to adjourn from place to place in Canada, that it sit while the House is not sitting, and that it have full power to call for persons and papers.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Hon. members might be concerned about the presence of two or more motions being moved at the same time. Any proposed motion that has been put forward is put forward conditionally upon the Chair finding a *prima facie* question of privilege; the motion cannot in fact be moved but, rather, is a contribution to the question of privilege that is being raised alternatively by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) or to the question raised by the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens). I have also received notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) and the hon. member for Okanagan-Kootenay (Mr. Johnston), but I see the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) is seeking the floor on a point of order.

[Mr. Stevens.]

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising out of what the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) has just said. He alleges indecision regarding my ability to be precise about conversations with the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid). That, of course, is so, but I did declare quite categorically to the House that on no occasion was either the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River, or any other member of the House for that matter, given any advance information of the excise provisions in the budget of November 18, or for that matter any other provision.

Mr. Broadbent: By yourself?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): By myself, or, to the best of my knowledge, by my officials.

An hon. Member: To the best of your knowledge.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Yes, to the best of my knowledge.

Mr. Sharp: What more can you get than that?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Nor was any advance information given to the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River or to any other member of the intention to present that amendment to the House, other than my cabinet colleagues.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is probably premature to give an indication of the stand that I propose to take respecting the point raised by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River. However, I would ask other hon. members who wish to make a contribution at this time to make it as brief as possible.

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I too rise on a question of privilege. My question arises from articles published in the *Montreal Gazette* both yesterday and today, and from statements made in the House by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) both yesterday and today. My question of privilege pertains to the fundamental importance of the principle of the maintenance of total secrecy of concerning tax changes in our system of government.

Claims have been made that the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River not only had prior certain knowledge of changes that were to be made to the budget in the fall of 1974, but that he conveyed such knowledge to others who may or may not have stood to gain personally from such knowledge. Although the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River denies the accuracy of those claims, the *Montreal Gazette* stands by its original substantive contention. Specifically, that newspaper reiterated in today's issue that the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River confirmed that he told their reporter, with reference to the forthcoming budgetary change at issue here:

● (1220)

We put on a lobby and we knew about six weeks before it was announced that it was coming off the boats but not the motors.

Mr. Speaker, if accurate, this in itself constitutes a serious breach of privilege which goes to the root of the parliamentary system. Serious questions must be asked