

Privilege

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): It does not matter what the people of Canada are saying with respect to these taxes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): It does not matter whether the hon. member for Mississauga South decides in his good judgment that it does not work. It is not worth the public money, the public purse, he says, to take this committee to Newfoundland. He has since recanted, but it does not matter what the people of Newfoundland say, the people of Nova Scotia, Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec. "Please Save This Notice. You are wasting your time. Do not bother to appear before this committee", that is what the government is actually saying.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): "Please Save This Notice". According to these ads these are the proposed changes which are going to come into effect. That is it. That is contempt of Parliament by those who write these ads. That is contempt of Parliament by those who authorize these ads. That is contempt of Parliament because only this House can authorize tax changes, only the House of Commons.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): This is the fundamental basis of the question of privilege before you. "Please Save This Notice". The ad states that specific measures will come into effect on a specific date—it does not matter what parliament does—when in fact no such tax legislation has been passed by the House of Commons. Nobody except perhaps the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance wants to see any such legislation introduced into the House of Commons. Certainly not the Tory back-benchers who have had something to say about it this week.

• (1110)

The House of Commons committee on finance is going across the country seeking the advice of taxpayers on a technical paper to decide whether or not to recommend to the Minister of Finance whether or not to introduce legislation, which this ad says is already written in stone, because "Please Save This Notice"; nothing is going to change.

These ads are a flagrant circumvention of a fundamental parliamentary principle that it is the House of Commons, the representatives of the people from every province and territory in this country; that it is we as

mandated by the people of Canada; that it is we the fiduciary of the people and only we on behalf of the people of Canada, who will have full control over what the taxes in this country are going to be.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): That right rests with parliament. It does not rest with a few slogan writers in a Tory advertising agency.

[*Translation*]

These advertisements violate our parliamentary tradition in two more ways. They prejudice the proceedings that are now before the Standing Committee on Finance as well as prejudicing future proceedings of the House itself.

Mr. Speaker, these ads constitute a breach of the rights and privileges of all Members and a contempt of Parliament.

A government that wastes millions and millions of dollars on newspaper ads not even a canary would want to see on the floor of its cage, and keeps saying that it is trying to cut spending in order to reduce the deficit, that Government is both hypocritical and utterly ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, what we have here is not just a flagrant breach of parliamentary privilege but a flagrant case of government stupidity.

The harebrained scheme proposed by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance is a contradiction of every word they ever said about tax reform, both in the House of Commons and across the country.

What we have here, Mr. Speaker, is not just an obvious case of a breach of the privileges of this House, it is a flagrant case of breach of good faith.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are backing a ridiculous proposal which is not only not tax neutral, as they promised, but is in fact the most flagrant tax grab in this country's history. It does not reflect the simplicity promised by this Government and would in fact create an administrative nightmare we would not wish on our worst enemies. It does not provide for provincial participation, as promised, and will make Canada the only nation in the world saddled with two entirely different sales tax systems: a federal and a provincial system.