

Having said all that, Mr. Speaker, may I point out that hon. members are very familiar with this issue and with the problems it creates not only for me but for all members who before entering this chamber had businesses or enterprises which in some form were subject to a degree of government regulation. I have said before in this House, and I am content to repeat it now, that this represents not only a personal matter to the extent that it creates a problem for me, with my background in business, but that there is a much broader question of principle here—and the hon. member has touched on it—as to the way in which someone wishing to become a member of this House and who is engaged in a business or other enterprise which in some way is subject to regulatory applications—and there are hundreds of agencies which might very well be so involved—manages to deal with the situation.

I want to make one point in this regard to illustrate what I have sought to do over the years in this connection. The hon. member said the matter ought to have been resolved before now. I sought to resolve it, as he well knows. I sought to do so by going well beyond the guidelines. In the first place, my association with this enterprise was known long before I entered parliament. It was known to those who elected me, and it has been known since. So there was no concealment. I went beyond that in recent times when the CRTC gave me permission—a permission which was unique—to form a trust. No one has ever sought to describe it as a blind trust, for obvious reasons. But the CRTC, in what I believe was a unique decision, authorized the formation of a trust so that I could transfer to that organization the decision-making with regard to my holdings in that company. That trust made a decision to seek to sell my interest in the organization.

That is a matter of record. It is public knowledge, and hearings were held with regard to it. Far from having any control over the CRTC, the result of that hearing was a decision to turn down my trustees and deny me the right to sell my holdings in the organization. This having happened, there is clearly not very much more which can be done by my trustees other than, presumably, to seek to resolve the situation in some other way, as I gather they are now doing. Let me assure the House that I was not aware of what the trustees were seeking to do until the public announcement with regard to the new proposal was placed on public record in newspapers and the like several weeks ago. I still do not know the details, and I shall not until the hearings are held. To endeavour, through this interlocking proposal, to suggest that the hon. member may be properly aggrieved in terms of the treatment he may have received from the stations, or his views on how the stations are being operated, to the suggestion, indirectly, that I have some responsibility for that, is clearly unreasonable in the light of what I have said.

Let me end by saying this. I am not referring now to the matter of substance which brought on this particular intervention by the hon. member for St. John's West. I am answering a particular comment which was made by him. I have no argument about his raising it. I am delighted that finally he has had the opportunity to do so in the House. If he will look

Privilege—Mr. Baldwin

back to the reports in *Hansard* about two or three years ago when this matter was raised earlier, he will find that I invited whatever agency of the House is appropriate for the task to consider not only my situation, one which, by the way, I would be very glad to lay out in considerably more detail than I have today, but also the predicament which is created by these circumstances for someone who throughout his public life has never sought unreasonably or in any other way to influence the media and who has tried to level with members on both sides of the House.

I emphasize that if the House wishes to examine this question of the way in which people in public life have interests relating in some way to their activities as members of parliament, I would have no objection whatever to these matters being discussed. I would be more than happy to outline what my situation has been over the years and, incidentally, to put forward a few proposals which I believe might help to resolve this awkward situation, not only for me and not only for other members who might be affected but for those who in future might wish to enter public life and who might question their desire to do so given the kind of circumstances we have heard about in the House today.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak very briefly because I have had some experience of these matters, having held the portfolio which the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) holds today. During the period in which I held that portfolio, any time I was described in the terms he is objecting to—I have read this article very carefully, and as far as I can see the most serious accusations I can find are those describing him as pompous, objectionable and obstinate—while I was minister of transport, any time I was only called those things was a banner day for me.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hees: Any action taken by a minister is bound to be controversial to some extent. Members of the press have a perfect right to express any opinions they may hold about what a minister is doing. That is an essential part of public life. The minister's threat that he is going to bring charges against a newspaper or a newspaper reporter because of an article which simply says that he is pompous, obstinate and obnoxious is about the most childish thing I have ever heard. It degrades the whole public life of this country. It indicates that ministers cannot take criticism as well as they can hand it out. As Harry Truman said, "If you cannot stand the heat, for God's sake get out of the kitchen and get on with the business of the country."

• (1610)

Mrs. Simma Holt (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I choose to intervene in this debate because I consider this to be a serious and fundamental right of a citizen who happens to be a member of parliament. Regardless of what has been said in the article, every citizen, whether that citizen happens to be a member of parliament, a driller or any other worker, has the right to phone a newspaper and say that he has been maligned, held in contempt and ridiculed. I have had occasion to do this