

business development bond, which was the only item in the budget to which he referred in his speech on leaders' day. But here they are raising questions about the actions I took.

In addition to tabling these ways and means motions, I gave information on the expenditure situation. This was done by the former president of the treasury board, and the minister of finance, in a most voluminous way before Parliament was called. Never given to Parliament. Is that a budget? I cannot understand why on this occasion, when motions are tabled and when, openly, they are tabled in the context of a speech which explains all the tax changes which are being reintroduced, a speech which gives information on the expenditure situation, the opposition should complain about an abrogation of the rights of Parliament. Why should they describe it as an abrogation of the rights of Parliament?

I carefully considered the precedents, Madam Speaker. I want to assure you that I considered very carefully whether I was in any way departing from a practice which had already been accepted by this House. Also, I wanted to make sure that nobody was caught by surprise. I wanted to make sure that I was making a statement in the context of the debate on the Speech from the Throne so that hon. members opposite would be alerted and so that if they wished to comment, criticize or condemn, they would have three or four additional days in which to do so. I was not concerned about the procedural ground, which I found very solid; I was concerned about the broad parliamentary character, namely, whether members opposite would have a fair chance to comment on anything I had done.

● (1230)

Last week, I called up the hon. member for St. John's West and told him I was going to make a speech last night. I tried to reach the financial critic of the New Democratic Party last week to tell him, but instead I conveyed the information to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) last week, alerting him that I was to make a speech on Monday night in which they ought to be interested, and to reserve their opportunity to speak after I did.

Mr. Clark: So you misled them too.

Mr. MacEachen: I indicated in general terms what I intended to do. Yesterday, if hon. members were alert, they would have noticed that I walked across the floor and sat with the hon. member for St. John's West and expanded upon my intentions, and I did the same thing with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. So I cannot understand why there is indignation at the procedure.

Mr. Clark: Because it is wrong, Allan.

Mr. MacEachen: I hope the indignation is not very serious.

Mr. Clark: It is profound.

Mr. MacEachen: I hope it is a vigilance which oppositions normally show, and that it is not an attempt to reflect upon a

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practice which has been followed by the former minister and other ministers of finance.

Mr. Clark: That is not true, Allan, and you know it.

Mr. MacEachen: If I had brought in new tax measures—

Mr. Clark: Which you have.

Mr. MacEachen:—and if I had established a firm expenditure and revenue plan for 1980-81, then hon. members might conclude that it was a budget. I ask them to go to Erskine May and get a definition of a budget. I ask them to go to Beauchesne and get the definition of a budget and, if that is not sufficiently clear and lucid to indicate that what I did last night was not a formal budget presentation, I ask them to go to the Oxford dictionary. All three of them will illustrate very vividly that what happened last night was obviously a speech relating to the finances of the country and to the economy, and the tabling of ways and means motions.

Mr. Nielsen: And imposing taxes.

Mr. MacEachen: But it certainly was not a budget. The hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) says it was a budget because I imposed taxes.

Mr. Nielsen: Without debate.

Mr. MacEachen: The hon. member for St. John's West did the very same thing.

Mr. Nielsen: Not without notice.

Mr. MacEachen: His motions, if the hon. member for Yukon had read them—which he tabled—raised taxes by several hundred million dollars.

Mr. Nielsen: That is specious.

Mr. MacEachen: If they had been called, those motions would have been debated in the normal way.

Miss MacDonald: "If".

Mr. MacEachen: The hon. lady for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) says "If". It is not my fault if her party has the capacity to self-destruct at critical times. I do not want to add any acrimony to the debate, but I stand by the statement I have made and say that the hon. member for St. John's West and hon. members of the New Democratic Party have plenty of opportunity to comment on what I did. No rights have been taken away in that sense. In fact, I think I have gone to good lengths to give them an opportunity to comment, because I could have tabled all these ways and means motions just by standing in the House and saying, "I table these ways and means motions, every one of them", and I would have done exactly what the hon. member for St. John's West did. I could have done that, and I am being attacked—

Mr. Clark: Poor Allan.