

As to who in the Department of Finance would have known of my intention to present that amendment, it would have been limited to officers in the taxation division of the department. I am not in a position to advise the Leader of the Opposition as to who actually would have had knowledge of that.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question of real relevance to the matter. The parliamentary secretary referred to information he received from officials of the Department of Finance. Does the Minister of Finance not consider it appropriate that he should have inquired, or at least should certainly now inquire, as to who were the officials in his department from whom the parliamentary secretary obtained the impression that these changes would probably be made, an impression that gave him sufficient certainty to write to firms engaged in this business in his constituency, a certainty as to the changes of policy to be made, thereby perhaps giving them an enormous advantage over their competitors?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** The hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River may or may not have received an impression from officials of the Department of Finance. That I do not know.

**An hon. Member:** He said he did.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** What I want to say to the hon. member is that no public servant in the Department of Finance would have known with assurance that any amendment would be proposed in the House until I, as Minister of Finance had approved it, and, even more important, until my colleagues in the Cabinet had approved it. It is only after that that it became a governmental decision on my recommendation.

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

**Mr. Baldwin:** When was the amendment drafted?

POSSIBILITY OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MINISTER AND  
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO PRESIDENT OF PRIVY  
COUNCIL CONCERNING TAX CHANGE ON BOATS

**Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of Finance indicate whether at any time he discussed with the parliamentary secretary the possibility of making the amendment which appeared on January 28?

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance):** I discussed that amendment in response to representations from at least 50 members of the House.

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

**Mr. Stevens:** I did not ask about the 50 members. Was one of the 50 members the parliamentary secretary?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** I cannot distinctly recall that.

Oral Questions

DATE OF DRAFTING AMENDMENT CONCERNING TAX ON  
BOATS

**Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe):** Would the Minister of Finance indicate when the amendment was drafted, how many days prior to January 28?

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance):** I will find out. If the matter goes to the standing committee, of course that information will be provided. I do not have the information at my fingertips.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

MR. REID—DEGREE OF CERTAINTY ABOUT TAX CHANGE ON  
BOATS

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council. On grounds that the disclosure of amendments to a budget in principle is not at all different from disclosure of budget details, I should like to ask the parliamentary secretary what degree of certitude he had that the knowledge he possessed was concerning a change in the budget? He wrote about it in December although it did not come until January. Was he totally convinced that the change was coming and, if so, with what sense of certitude did he disclose that conviction?

**Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, after lobbying ministers for changes in legislation and talking to officials, it has always been my impression that I can tell pretty well whether or not a government is going to move on something. If I were not able to operate on that basis, I would be a pretty ineffective member of parliament. I would say to the hon. member who posed the question that my certitude was to the extent that I was prepared to bet two bottles of scotch that I was right and he was wrong. So I would say that as a result of the lobbying which I had done among members on all sides and officials of the department, I was reasonably certain of it because of the pressure that was being put on.

I might say, in answer to that kind of question, that there was a discussion of this very operation in the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, as recorded at page 15 of the issue from which the hon. member for York-Simcoe quoted. I want to read a brief quotation to make my point. It reads:

I for one on that very precise example said to various people, the Minister is going to withdraw this excise tax provision. And I had no confidential information whatsoever. It was just a good guess on my part, an intuition.

That was said by an hon. member who sits on the other side of the House.

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

**Mr. Reid:** So I think that those of us who represent similar constituencies, and who had lobbied hon. members and talked to the departmental officials, had a very good idea of what was going to happen.