

Privilege—Mr. Clark

I quite agree with the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) when he says that in view of what the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) did in April when he presented that budgetary document, a budget by strip-tease—I do not know if it is strip-tease or mummified, but I won't get into that—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Foster: Keep your shirt on!

Mr. Nowlan: The hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Foster) has been here a long time and he should know. It is a tragedy that some of those members opposite did not sit in the opposition a little longer to find out what the frustrations are and what some of the sensitivities are.

It is ironic. This Parliament was supposed to rise a week from Friday, or perhaps two weeks from Friday. I must say I am prepared to get out, but I am also prepared to stay. As the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood and someone else said, it was not a flag debate, it was a pipeline debate. Why is it always pipelines and gas which sometimes bring out the parliamentary struggle? It was a parliamentary debate on pipelines in the hot summer days back in the fifties which fundamentally affected not only the Speaker of that day but also the parliamentary rights of the government.

I know we have just come through an election and we have this new Parliament which we frankly all expect may work for two or three years, but who knows? I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that this type of parliamentary contempt on taxing provisions may be legally within the rules but absolutely tramples on the rights of parliamentarians in this House. There are backbenchers on the government side who will be just as horrified to find out the implications of this taxing bill as any members on this side, as well as the public.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nowlan: In conclusion, Madam Speaker, we talk about privilege and we all know members who abuse the privileges. We have sensitive egos from time to time and there is not a member here who should not have an ego that sometimes gets sensitized. But I go back to King George III and taxation without representation. We have the representation here, but what is the good of representation in the formal institution of Parliament if it is never consulted? That is the problem, Madam Speaker. My privileges as a member of Parliament representing a constituency in Atlantic Canada are grievously affected if I go home tonight, meet a person on the street and he or she asks me: "What is that tax going to do to me in terms of my processing plant? Am I going to be able to produce apple juice next year? What will it do to my heating bill next year in terms of thermal generation? Because I only have \$10,000 from a war pension, do I get a tax rebate because I do not have an income of \$12,000?"

Madam Speaker, my rights as a member of Parliament are fundamentally infringed upon because I cannot give an answer

to any of those questions. I did not know about this tax until I found out today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nowlan: Perhaps it is good that this is coming up early in the session so that somehow we can try to get some common sense through to the other side. Madam Speaker, there is not a single member here who can answer questions from some of their constituents on something fundamental like taxes. If we cannot answer questions on taxing policies affecting gas, oil and heat, is that not a privilege affecting my duties as a member of the House of Commons?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to hear from the opposition members that they do recognize that the step which has been taken today is a step which fully and completely respects parliamentary rules.

An hon. Member: Right on!

Mr. Lalonde: What has been introduced today, under the rules of this House, is a notice of ways and means, the standard way in which adjustments of the nature made here are made in this House. When such ways and means motions are introduced they become effective immediately, but they are tabled in this House, indeed for debate, to enable the House to consider and debate them. I think every member from the opposition side has had to recognize that the procedure which has been followed here is not only the regular one but the correct one to follow in such circumstances.

I am sure that when hon. members have had time and have taken the trouble to read the notice of ways and means, they will realize that the facts do not correspond to some of the assertions or statements that have been made.

Mr. Clark: What happens to the heating bill of widows in Atlantic Canada?

Mr. Lalonde: This is not an additional \$1.75 a barrel. It deals with an increase of \$1 to \$1.75 of the Syncrude levy that is collected, and has been collected for years in this country, in order to pay the so-called international price for synthetic oil. This is what this does. It is not providing for figures like the 12 cents per gallon that has been mentioned. Again, if hon. members bother to read they will realize—

An hon. Member: How much?

Mr. Clark: What will it cost the widow in Wolfeville?

Mr. Lalonde: I see the loser Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) is unable to control himself again.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lalonde: I am sorry the Leader of the Opposition makes the statements he does because he does not know the facts, I am sure. He will realize it costs half a cent a litre. That is what the hon. member would have realized had he bothered