

*Privilege*

[Translation]

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Mr. Speaker, during this debate, you will hear precedent after precedent, legal arguments, technical arguments, all sorts of things, but the basic argument involves the privileges of Canadians, whose trustees we are and for whom we are responsible. Now is the time for this Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), for this Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), to recognize their responsibilities and to comply with the requirements of our Parliamentary system. Let the Minister of Finance resign, because through his Department, he was negligent by allowing a whole budget to be revealed before the date it was to be presented to the House. He violated the privileges of every Canadian by telling them to trust our system, to trust our Parliament, to trust their Government, and above all, their Minister of Finance, who holds the most sensitive and important position after the Prime Minister.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, if you grant me a *prima facie* case of privilege, not only for the Hon. Members on both sides of the House, not only for the House itself, but for all Canadians, I would be prepared, at your discretion, to present a motion whereby the House can make the final decision.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

[English]

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, this morning when he came into the House the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) raised the question of his alleged claim to an offence of his privileges as a Member. I say to the Minister of Finance that it is all other Members of the House of Commons who have a question of privilege against the incompetence and total irresponsibility of a Minister of Finance who should have resigned this morning.

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** We have had the clearest possible demonstration coming from the Minister himself, supported by a Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), who I hope will join in the debate, who is sitting there and giving support to a Minister who comes into the House and does not resign when he ought to, rises on a question of privilege and does not even have the—and I choose my words with care—responsibility to move a motion to have

this subject referred to a committee that would examine what went on. That is what the Minister ought to have done, and he did not even move the motion.

The Government that we have seen for a number of years has had all its lines of communication and its standards set by the republic to the south of us. It is in the midst of discovering, and I say this to the Minister and to the Prime Minister, what the supremacy of Parliament and parliamentary democracy is all about in this debate.

The Minister in getting to his feet and in his all too brief statement said that there has been no negligence, there has been tight security and we wonder how it got out. Both of those statements we do not know and they ought to be examined, and then there is something we do know something about. The Minister of Finance said that he came to the House at the earliest possible moment. I say to the Minister that that is not true. The Government knew about this at 5.30 yesterday and it ought to have come to the House at that time.

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** Instead of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lewis) phoning the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) and myself and getting us to collaborate in this totally inappropriate course of action, the correct course of action would have been for the Minister of Finance, when he discovered this important breach for which he is ultimately responsible, to have come into the House yesterday, said what happened, and submitted his resignation as an honourable man.

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

• (1150)

**Mr. Broadbent:** This tradition of parliamentary supremacy and accountability of Ministers is not a mere secondary aspect about our form of democracy. In the United States of America, Ministers—Secretaries in the Cabinet—do not have to come before Congress. For a President who has done some wrong, the only procedure left open to the American population is the very exceptional impeachment process.

We have in this system accountability of Ministers on a day-to-day basis, on the assumption that they understand they are accountable for what they do to the House of Commons, and if we have ever seen the clearest illustration that they do not understand parliamentary democracy, we have seen it this morning.