

policy that has not yet been approved by the Parliament of Canada. That is the point that is at stake here.

I want to say in making this point that I listened with interest to the Leader of the Opposition and support almost everything he had to say, but I also note that he said at one point that what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander. He was quoting the Conservatives at length in their criticism of such action in the past. What he did not point out, of course, is that the Conservatives, when they were criticizing this action, were criticizing the Liberal government that was performing in precisely the same manner.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that there has been an evolution toward this kind of advocacy advertising on the part of governments that was opposed by the New Democratic Party when it was done in 1980 by a federal Liberal government following a referendum in the province of Quebec, a referendum, the federal side of which had been supported by the then Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Member for Yellowhead, and the government and the New Democratic Party. We believed that advertising that advocated a certain policy before it was approved by the Parliament of Canada, even if it was a policy we advocated, should not be supported by the spending of public funds. We said it in 1980; we repeat it now. I just wish the Liberals were a little more consistent.

Mr. Simmons: I cannot take it.

Mr. Broadbent: No, the Liberals cannot take it. They have trouble with the truth. The Liberals have a lot of problems with that.

Mr. Simmons: What would you know about that?

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that not only has the government proceeded over the summer in utter contempt of parliament by saying that changes are going to come into effect in 1991, but it has in the same ad listed a whole number of alleged elements of this change, the factual claims of which are totally at variance with the documents that were produced during the summer pertinent to the 9 per cent increase.

I want to deal both with the matter of parliamentary legitimacy which is being violated by the Government,

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and, in that context, with the misleading nature of the ads themselves in terms of what the government claims it is doing with this 9 per cent tax. It is full of outright misstatements, to use parliamentary language, that outside the House might be called by ordinary people, lies. Let me say it is misleading in terms of what is in there.

• (1150)

The ad says that this change that will go into effect at the beginning of 1991 is going to, among other things, help low-income Canadians. The reality is that some 300,000 families at or below the poverty level are going to be paying more taxes, not lower taxes, as a result of this 9 per cent change. So the government is misleading the people on that claim itself.

Mr. Oberle: Be honest!

Mr. Broadbent: I am, and the minister should be honest. He should go through these ads and listen to the interest groups who have appeared before the parliamentary committee, not supporters of the opposition parties, stating their views. He would then find out the truth about what is involved.

Not only is it inappropriate for the government to be spending money in advance of Parliament taking a stand on a policy matter, whether it is a tax matter or any other, but it is also the case in the given instance that the government, having done this, subsequently agreed with changes proposed by opposition parties to have hearings outside of Ottawa and even to have these hearings televised so the people of Canada can have their views known. If all these changes that the government asserts in its advertising are going to take place with the considerable detail outlined in the advertisements put in the papers, what, we ask, is the relevance of the hearings.

Does it make sense to go to the people of Canada? According to a decision reached, the committee is going to eight provinces as well as to Whitehorse. There surely is a contempt of Parliament by proceeding with these ads before Parliament has agreed. Beyond that, there is a contempt of the people of Canada if they say they are going to have hearings across the country and not pay the slightest attention to what the people of Canada have to say.