

propriety of the government's actions, that is, whether or not it was proper for the government to advertise its position on a subject under debate in Parliament. To a limited extent, debate raised the issue of new techniques of public persuasion and its application to Parliament. The Chair will remain vigilant to new techniques in communication and generally to make certain that parliamentary privilege is upheld. The Chair is also confident that she will be prompted from time to time by members in this respect.

● (1210)

However, it is difficult to find a *prima facie* case of privilege in the allegations of government spending which do not impede the House or the members in their parliamentary work. The decision of my predecessor on December 10, 1975, referred to in the course of this debate, related to the use of government funds to pay the expenses of government members of the House of Commons while doing work at the government's request, and is thus somewhat removed from the allegations here.

The spending of public money cannot be the issue, but when a person or a government attempts to interfere with our deliberations through spending public money, or otherwise, directly or indirectly, or acts in contempt of the House, such action would constitute a *prima facie* case. However, the interference must be such that the member or the House is truly hindered or intimidated.

The fact that certain members feel they are disadvantaged by not having the same funds to advertise as does the government, which could possibly be a point of debate, as a matter of impropriety or under any other heading, does not constitute a *prima facie* case of privilege unless such advertisements themselves constitute a contempt of the House, and to do so there would have to be some evidence that they represent a publication of false, perverted, partial or injurious reports of the proceedings of the House of Commons or misrepresentations of members. There is no evidence before me to suggest that. Rather, the advertising referred to by members seems to deal with the issue of the constitution rather than the proceedings of the House. Therefore, while the hon. member raised a very important question, which was ably debated by all hon. members, it was not a question involving the privileges of the House requiring the intervention of the Chair.

Indeed, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) made the point during the debate that the subject ought to be debated. Of course, everyone agrees that the House ought to debate important questions, but other opportunities exist for debate on matters of this sort and the Chair is sure that members of Parliament will take full advantage of these opportunities.

[*Translation*]

MR. BROADBENT—PUBLICLY FINANCED POLLS

Madam Speaker: I would also like to give my ruling on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Oshawa

Privilege—Mr. Hnatyshyn

(Mr. Broadbent). Notwithstanding the fact that he is not in the House at the moment and that it is usually in the presence of the member concerned that such rulings are given, I believe that I should nevertheless give my ruling today.

On Friday, October 10, the hon. member for Oshawa also raised a question of privilege related to the one I have just referred to. He concentrated on the issue of publishing the results of government polls. He complained of the fact that the results of these polls were not available and asked that priority be given to this matter during the debates now under way and that it be referred to the committee. Once again, hon. members must not forget that the rules concerning parliamentary privileges are designed to allow them to do all that is needed to fulfil their parliamentary duties and for the operation of this House. The question raised by the hon. member is certainly a very important question of principle on which he and others expressed certain opinions. This subject should probably be debated. However, as moved the motion is a substantive motion which therefore requires prior notice. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) has stated that the results of 129 polls out of 141 will be published while those of 12 offices will remain confidential for a certain time.

The hon. member for Oshawa expressed his disagreement about this decision of the minister, as he had the right to do. However, for the Chair to give priority to any matter, there must be evidence of some element of infringement upon the privilege of members or of some substantial offence to the House and the member concerned. Even though this question is very important, the Chair cannot find any evidence of such an element.

[*English*]

MR. HNATYSHYN—PUBLIC OPINION POLLS—ADVERTISEMENT SPONSORED BY GOLDFARB CONSULTANTS

Madam Speaker: Finally, yesterday the hon. member for Saskatoon West (Mr. Hnatyshyn) raised a question of privilege based on an advertisement which appeared in a recent edition of a newspaper in which it is alleged that the information to be made available by a private pollster who had been engaged by the government appears to be similar to the information alleged to have been refused to be provided to members by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien). The hon. member also offers to provide the advertisement in question and the material sent by the Minister of Justice to all members.

Hon. members will appreciate that this alleged question of privilege may be described as an extension of our proceedings of October 9 and 10 last on which I just ruled. Again, I do not think it is unfair to suggest that we are not only dealing with a complaint about government activity, but in addition about the activity of the pollster in question.

With respect to the activities of the government, members will appreciate that unless there is an order of the House directing any such activities, the Chair must be guided by the