

In the brief period at my disposal, I have endeavoured to find a precedent or other authority to sustain the honourable Member's contention that his submission raised a *prima facie* question of the breach of the privileges of this House.

It might be of interest to honourable Members were I to refer to an incident that is reported at page 3825 of *Hansard* dated April 20, 1961. On that occasion it was suggested that a pamphlet, produced and circulated by the Department of Agriculture, in relation to the operation of the provisions of a bill then before the House, had violated the rights of Parliament in that the Minister had assumed powers beyond those authorized for him by substituting the powers of his department for the legislative powers of this Parliament.

Unfortunately this precedent, which is the only one we have been able to find, is not too helpful since after a discussion and debate on the point of privilege, no motion was tendered by the Member who raised the matter as a question of privilege, and as a consequence the Speaker was not called upon to make a ruling.

I must also add that neither the Standing Orders of the House nor other recognized authorities are of much assistance to the Chair in making a decision at this time.

As a final recourse, I must refer to what is commonly called a general definition of acts or conduct which constitute a breach of privilege. That definition is recorded at page 109, May's 17th edition, as follows: "It would be vain to attempt an enumeration of every act which might be construed into a contempt, the power to punish for contempt being in its nature discretionary. Certain principles may, however, be collected from the *Journals* which will serve as general declarations of the law of Parliament. It may be stated generally that any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence."

The Chair has been unable to conclude that the conduct of the Minister of Finance, as related by the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre, was an effort to obstruct or impede any Member of this House in the discharge of his duty or that such action had the tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results.

Whether or not it was proper to prepare and circulate what the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre described as "propaganda material", is in the opinion of the Chair, a matter of administration, which can be debated by honourable Members in a variety of ways. In fact, a number of questions have already been asked by honourable Members in relation to this matter. I have to conclude that although there may be a grievance against the government, a *prima facie* case of breach of parliamentary privilege has not been established.

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#### *Returns and Reports Deposited with the Clerk of the House*

The following papers having been deposited with the Clerk of the House were laid upon the Table pursuant to Standing Order 41(1), namely:

By Mr. Macdonald, a Member of the Queen's Privy Council,—Return to an Order of the House, dated October 22, 1969 (Question No. 2,452), showing: 1.