

that. I said to journalists I could not comment on what was in the report.

Mr. Lewis: What were you doing in Saskatchewan?

Mr. Nystrom: I was in Yorkton for Remembrance Day services that weekend.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that there is no point of privilege. There have been no documents leaked. I think you could talk to any journalist you want and you would find that they have received no documents from the finance committee, certainly not from members of my Party and probably not from most members of that particular committee.

There has also been speculation of heavy-handed phone calls going to members. One was received by the member from Cambridge, from the vice-chairman of the finance committee. I suggest there has been a lot of rumour, innuendo and insinuation. I think the member across the way just protests a bit too much. He is doing a little bit of public crying. I think there is no point of privilege whatsoever.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, the problem the hon. member is talking about seems to have been created by his own colleagues in the Conservative caucus. I am talking about the chairman of the finance committee himself and a number of other members of the finance committee from the Conservative party who appear to have been quoted at some length in various articles in the press as to what the Conservative majority on the committee might end up recommending.

If that is the case, then I find it hard to see how there could be a prima facie case of privilege if other members of Parliament, using their undoubted rights of free speech, comment at the request of the press on the speculative stories in the press, the source of which appears to have been the Conservative chairman of the finance committee and several other members of that committee.

I have not had an opportunity, because I had no knowledge that this question of privilege was going to come up, to read your ruling of May 5, 1987. I would be prepared to offer further argument at some later point. I doubt very much if that ruling, and I say this without having had a chance to review it, dealt with the situation

we are talking about today. I would be happy to offer, as I have said, some detailed argument on that point.

I think we have to make a distinction between the alleged premature disclosure of a report of a committee that has actually been discussed, voted upon and finalized, and comments by members of Parliament in response to questions put to them by journalists on stories that have appeared in the press, especially if these stories were inspired by members of the Conservative majority on the committee.

I say to the hon. member the issue is not really one for a prima facie case of privilege, rather it is something that fits under the old maxim "doctor, heal thyself". I suggest that maxim be applied to the Conservative members of the finance committee.

Having said that, I hope I can reserve the right to give further argument, if you so desire, based on what was the actual content of your ruling which I have not had a chance to review. Even not having done that, I respectfully submit that what has been said by the hon. member does not suggest a prima facie case of privilege.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, perhaps as just a useful piece of information, not being aware that the hon. member from Edmonton was going to raise this question of privilege, I believe that in his presentation he pointed out that on November 9 the hon. member from Yorkton—Melville was making some comments about speculation regarding the Conservative members on the committee.

• (1120)

I would like to draw to the member's attention a Canadian Press article of October 28, some days previous, wherein the chairman of the finance committee, Mr. Don Blenkarn, is speculating that he would be recommending a tax on the sale of every house in Canada as a way of enabling the committee to lower its proposed 9 per cent goods and services tax. It is quite a lengthy article that goes on pointing out what the committee will be recommending and certainly what he will be recommending for the committee's consideration.

If my hon. friend is concerned about members of the committee commenting prematurely, he ought to raise with the chairman of the committee concerns regarding his comments. It is only fair to say that this is one of many. I think even the Prime Minister has acknowledged the fact that the chairman of the finance committee not only speculates prematurely but has views that the