

• (1500)

What they should not be doing is preventing the budget process from proceeding as it should, the budget from being read tonight, and I would hope that at least some of the debate would be on the substance of the budget and not on the process of the budget, because what the people of Canada want is economic results.

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

#### POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE IN DOCUMENT

**Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova):** Madam Speaker, what the people of Canada want is a little less sophistry and a little more honesty from the Prime Minister. Obviously the Prime Minister did not answer my question.

**Mr. Clark:** You personify corruption.

**Mr. MacKay:** Is it apparent that he refuses to answer my question. I will ask him again. Has he already seen and approved in final form the budget that the people of Canada and this House will be receiving tonight, or is it one of these chameleon-like budgets that will be changed up until the last possible moment? What about the copies of the budget that have been sent across the country? What about the press lockup? Does the Prime Minister still hold that this budget that has been so carefully guarded with this unprecedented secrecy is the same budget that the Minister of Finance held up to the TV cameramen, or has it been changed? Surely he can be honest enough to tell us.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, if I were to answer that question it would not be a matter of honesty, it would be a matter of indiscretion, and the Hon. Member wants me to commit that indiscretion. He wants me to tell this House that something that has been purportedly from the budget will in fact be in the budget and be leaked. I will not tell him. But when he accuses me of sophistry, I wish he would explain what sophistry I just committed.

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[Translation]

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Madam Speaker:** As Hon. Members are aware, pursuant to a special order of the House, tomorrow the House will be considering Government Orders, while Private Members' Business will be considered on Friday. Consequently, the Order Paper and Notices will be published on Friday and not on Wednesday.

*Privilege—Mr. Nielsen*

#### PETITION

MR. FULTON—NORTH SLOPE DEVELOPMENT

**Madam Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the petition presented by the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) on Monday, April 18, meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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[English]

#### PRIVILEGE

MR. NIELSEN—REPORTED LEAK OF PROPOSED BUDGETARY MEASURES

The House resumed consideration of the question of privilege of Mr. Nielsen.

**Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre):** Madam Speaker, at one o'clock I was addressing the point of privilege raised by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Nielsen) respecting the matter of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) having leaked portions of the budget that is to be revealed later this evening.

It has been established very clearly that there has been important information leaked to the public, information that dramatically affects public financial markets, from a document identified by the Minister of Finance as the budget. It has also been clearly established that that leak is in violation of the Minister of Finance's oath of secrecy and his responsibilities. You have indicated to us, Madam Speaker, that it is necessary to show how those two actions, first the material being leaked, second the violation of the Minister's responsibilities, affect the privilege of the House and that is what I would like to do.

Section 16 of *Beauchesne* defines very clearly the privileges of Parliament. This was quoted earlier by the Right Hon. Member for Yellowhead (Mr. Clark) and I quote again:

The privileges of Parliament are rights which are "absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers".

The privileges of Parliament are absolutely necessary for the execution of its powers. As well, reading from Section 21 of *Beauchesne*:

The most fundamental privilege—

Which is absolutely necessary for the execution of the powers.

—of the House as a whole is to establish rules of procedure for itself and to enforce them.

To reinforce that, Madam Speaker, Section 20(3) of *Beauchesne* states that at the beginning of each session the Chair claims from the Governor General on behalf of the House, and I quote:

—all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to Your Excellency's person at all reasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from Your Excellency the most favourable construction.