

Privilege—Mr. W. Baker

Mr. MacEachen: I faced the additional fact that there were ways and means motions which had been tabled by the hon. member for St. John's West that were still there.

Mr. Blenkarn: They died.

Mr. MacEachen: The hon. member ought to remember that there were many people out in the country in the business community who were calling the department and writing to me asking what disposition I intended to make of the unfinished business arising from the budget of the present Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) and the ways and means motions arising from the budget of the hon. member for St. John's West.

Mr. Clark: They are separate matters.

Mr. MacEachen: They wanted answers. I wanted to deal with that as quickly as possible in order to clear up the uncertainty. It is very surprising to me that the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton should overlook recent history. What made the statement last night a budget if it was a budget? What is a budget? Is the tabling of ways and means motions the essence of a budget? I argue that the tabling of ways and means motions is not, in itself, the essence of a budget. If that were the case, the hon. member for St. John's West would have presented two budgets in the only session of the last Parliament.

● (1220)

Standing Order 61(1) reads:

A notice of a ways and means motion may be laid upon the Table of the House at any time during a sitting day by a minister of the Crown but such a motion may not be proposed in the same sitting.

In other words, it is possible to table the motion but it is not possible to ask for concurrence. That practice has been followed by other ministers of finance. It was followed by my predecessor when on October 25 last he laid upon the Table notices of ways and means motions. In fact, on October 25 he moved that those ways and means motions be concurred in, both a ways and means motion to amend the Income Tax Act laid upon the Table on Tuesday, October 23—two days earlier—and a motion to amend the income tax application rules laid upon the table Tuesday, October 23, 1979.

These were not insignificant measures which were reintroduced by the hon. member for St. John's West. The tabling of the ways and means motions for the Income Tax Act and Customs Tariff amendments were contained in the budget of November 16, 1978. The new income tax motion—I draw this to the attention of the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton—significantly altered one of the measures, namely, the application of the small business tax rate to professionals. That income tax ways and means motion relieved and tightened.

In addition, there was a tabling of a ways and means motion for sales and excise tax changes from the November 16, 1978, budget. Was it a minuscule event? It certainly had broader implications than any step I took, because it contained \$1 billion in tax reductions, and some tax increases. These were

motions laid upon the Table by the former minister of finance last October.

I draw to your attention, Madam Speaker, that in the summer the minister issued a press release in which he gave notice that he would be tabling these ways and means motions. One hon. member made a point about the fact that the general motion relating to the budget had been defeated, and that therefore, for some reason, these motions should not be revived in any way.

An hon. Member: They are not ways and means motions.

Mr. MacEachen: Of course they are ways and means motions. The ways and means motions which I tabled last night were never dealt with by the former Parliament. They were never called. They were never concurred in. They were never defeated, and they were not approved. Neither thing happened to these particular ways and means motions. It is a travesty to suggest that the defeat or the carrying of the particular general motion on the budget presentation predetermined the result of the ways and means motions.

Let me explain to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark): his minister of finance brought in ways and means motions which had been presented by a defeated government and which had been voted against by his party on the main budget resolution. So you cannot have it both ways. The former minister of finance brought in these ways and means motions because he thought they were good, even though his party had voted against his predecessor's budget and even though the government which had introduced these ways and means motions had been defeated in the campaign.

Mr. Clark: But not in the House.

Mr. MacEachen: Not in the House, but which is the more important—the House or the people of Canada?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: That is a red herring which has been drawn by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton. His argument is a red herring. What I did was to revive motions which were tabled by the former minister of finance, and what he did was to revive motions which had been tabled by his predecessor, the present Minister of Justice. If I had to go through the formality of a budget presentation to accomplish that, I ask the hon. member why he did not do that himself.

An hon. Member: The circumstances were different.

Mr. MacEachen: What else did I do after I had revived some of these motions? I thought hon. members opposite would welcome the fact that I had accepted and brought back into the House certain measures which they thought were important. I did not bring in any new measures, not a single new tax measure. Except for some technical modifications, they are exactly the same motions. I thought hon. members would welcome them. I thought the Leader of the Opposition would welcome the fact that I had brought in the small