

ability to ensure that Parliament's rights and responsibilities remain undiminished, and I am confident that you will use that power on the basis of the evidence I have presented this afternoon.

If you find, Madam Speaker, that I have a *prima facie* question of privilege, I will move, seconded by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath):

That the question of the government's energy advertising campaign and all relevant documents relating to the campaign be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for examination and report.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I will leave to the Canadian public the decision to judge the frivolous points which have been raised by the opposition during the debate on the resolution of the constitution.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lalonde: Day after day, unable to debate the substance of the important constitutional points which are before this House, divided as they are, the Conservative opposition have tried to raise phony questions of privilege and phony points of order. They have wasted a great many hours of this House in raising points which have all been rejected as ill founded.

I suggest that the particular point raised by the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty) is in exactly the same category. In effect, if he had listened to the debate and to the question periods in this House over the last few weeks, he would not have dared or bothered to rise in his seat and occupy 20 minutes of the time of the House with the point he has raised because, as I said on a point of order during his intervention—and I should like to repeat it now quite clearly—the senior official in question had recognized that he had prepared the memo to which the hon. member had referred. When interviewed about it some weeks ago, he indicated that indeed his minister had rejected the memo he had prepared. I stated, standing in my seat in this very House—

An hon. Member: You did exactly what he said.

Mr. Lalonde:—I stated quite categorically that I had rejected the proposal put forward by the senior official in question, and that I did not agree with the objective or with the way in which he was proposing to go about it.

I think I heard my hon. friend state that he did not believe me. I do not want to misquote him, but if he said that I would suggest that he knows the rules of the House and, if he does not believe a statement made by an hon. member in the House, there are rules in the House to deal with such cases. Otherwise, I suggest he should take my statement for what it is, as a statement of facts as they had developed.

Mr. Andre: Ironclad as it is.

Mr. Lalonde: The old argument of my hon. friend is based on a memo which had been rejected. I could go even further,

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but I will not go into the substance of this memo because, as I said, it is completely irrelevant to this issue.

As to the advertising which is going on currently and has gone on for several weeks, if my hon. friend had taken the trouble to study it—and I note that in his argument he has not referred to a single word used in any of those advertisements—I submit he would find that the advertising campaign, which has been in existence for several weeks or months now, is exactly in line with the advertising campaign which was carried out by his government when they were in office, and by the previous Liberal government. As a matter of fact, if my hon. friend would look at the amount of advertising done by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources last year he would find that it cost about \$5 million, which is certainly not very different from the figure which he has mentioned in his intervention.

Therefore, not wanting to waste any more time of the House, let me point out that I think there are issues of great importance and significance before the House now and I would not want to prevent hon. members from participating in the debate on the constitutional issue. However, so far as the question of privilege raised by my hon. friend is concerned, I submit to the House, and to you, Madam Speaker, that it is completely without foundation, that it is completely irrelevant, and as such should be rejected.

Mr. McGrath: Madam Speaker—

Mr. Neil: Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Do both hon. members wish to intervene on the same question of privilege?

Tomorrow I shall rule on the question of privilege which was put forward by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) which pertains to the same area of argument which has been made by the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty). Although it is not on the same subject matter, I feel the two points are very close. After the 20 minute intervention on the part of the hon. member, I honestly feel that the Chair is sufficiently informed, having also heard from the minister, and I should like the House to return to the other business before it. Tomorrow after the question period I shall rule on these two questions of privilege.

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, you indicated the other day in response to the member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) that, should there be other points to be raised in debates on privilege such as this, you would hear them, and I do have points to be raised. The member who raised the matter today was kind enough to give me a copy of his written transcript where, for instance, he omitted one of the more forceful points of his submission to you today, which arguments, I submit with respect to the Chair, are quite different from those which have been raised by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark), and should be, in my submission to you, considered quite separately from the arguments presented by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition the other day—