

Let me deal with two other matters raised by the Government House Leader before he left the House, presumably to join the Minister of Finance who is also not here while the propriety of his actions is being discussed in the House of Commons of Canada. First, he said that in the Dalton case the resignation occurred after the budget had been presented; the resignation occurred as soon as it became known that a breach had occurred. We knew last night that a breach had occurred. That was raised by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition immediately and the House of Commons met after that knowledge became known in the country. That is on all fours with the Dalton case. In the Dalton case, when it was clear that a breach had occurred, the request was made for a committee to be struck and a committee was so struck. The timing of the budget was irrelevant in the Dalton matter.

What happened in the Dalton case we are suggesting should happen here, because it is within the traditions of parliamentary democracy that once it becomes clear there has been a breach of budget secrecy, there is a *prima facie* case that requires consideration by a committee of the House. That was the Dalton precedent; it is on all fours with the precedent here.

Finally, he made the rather curious argument that what was reported last night, what was leaked last night after the Minister of Finance invited reporters into his boudoir, was not the budget. He is now pretending that it was something else, that it was not the budget, that we will not know if it was the budget. There are two things to be said about that. First, if the Minister of Finance of Canada was luring reporters into his room, holding up a document which purported to be a budget, letting it be photographed knowing there were zoom lenses there and allowing the public of Canada to believe that there would be something in the budget tonight which will not be in the budget tonight, that is even a more flagrant breach of public trust than it would be for him simply to have been careless and stupid.

We thought that the Minister was guilty only of stupidity. If we believe the Government House Leader that it may well be that what was revealed last night is not what will be presented tonight, then he is not just guilty of stupidity. He is guilty of a fraud upon the people of Canada, a fraud from which the wealthy could profit and a fraud from which the less wealthy in the country could suffer. If we are to believe the Government House Leader in his argument that what was leaked last night did not relate to the contents of the budget, then he is himself calling the Minister of Finance a fraud.

The other way to deal with that argument is from the mouth of the Minister of Finance himself. Those of us who have watched these proceedings know that when the Minister of Finance held up the document last night before the television cameras, which he invited into his office, he waved it around and said these words: "This is the budget".

What the Government House Leader is saying is that the document which the Minister of Finance called the budget last night is no longer the budget. That stretches credibility far too far. We have to accept the word of the Minister of Finance when he invited journalists in and opened the budget to be

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photographed by zoom lenses. We have to accept that he knew what he was talking about when he said: "This document is the budget; this that I am holding up for you to photograph is the budget". We have to assume, further, that he did that deliberately and that he knew it was the budget.

We understand from a press report that his press secretary warned the Minister to "watch those papers". He was so careless that his own staff told him to watch those papers. I watched on television when he said to the cameras: "Are there any zoom lenses here?", in effect inviting cameras with zoom lenses to focus in on the budget papers which he then held open.

Let me come to the question of the oath, because it is one of the bases of a question of privilege. You have sworn an oath, Madam Speaker, as a Privy Councillor, as have I. We are both familiar with its contents. I will not tire or bore the House by reading the entire convoluted oath, but let me read the relevant portions. I am referring to the oath sworn to by every Minister of the Crown. The relevant portions in English are:

—you will keep close and secret all such matters as shall be treated, debated and resolved on in Privy Council, without publishing or disclosing the same or any part thereof, by Word, Writing, or any otherwise to any Person out of the same Council, but to such only as be of the Council.

That is the relevant portion of the oath which you signed as a Privy Councillor and to which you swore as a Privy Councillor. The swearing of that oath gives a Privy Councillor a special standing in the House of Commons. It is the basis of the authority that a Privy Councillor who is also a Minister of the Crown enjoys in the House of Commons. It is the whole basis of that authority.

If that oath is breached, the ability of each of us as Private Members in the House of Commons to accept the word or to accept the authority of the Minister who breached his oath is undermined and lost. Consequently, the privilege of each Member of the House of Commons is lost when a Minister breaches his oath, as this Minister breached his oath last night on public television.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: Reading from *Beauchesne*, the definition of "privilege" is:

The distinctive mark of a privilege is its ancillary character. The privileges of Parliament are rights which are "absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers". They are enjoyed by individual Members, because the House cannot perform its functions without unimpeded use of the services of its Members; and by each House for the protection of its Members and the vindication of its own authority and dignity.

What is important here is that these rights and privileges are enjoyed by individual Members "because the House cannot perform its functions without unimpeded use of the services of its Members". Members of the House of Commons cannot perform their services and functions unless they can accept the basis of authority which allows a Minister of the Crown to have a special role in the House. In other words, we cannot do our job unless Ministers honour their oath. When a Minister breaks his oath, as the Minister of Finance broke his oath last night, the ability of individual Members of Parlia-