

*Privilege—Mr. Stevens*

**Madam Speaker:** Obviously this has taken place without my knowledge as, it seems, without the knowledge of the Hon. Minister of Public Works (Mr. LeBlanc).

**Mr. Nielsen:** All the more privilege.

**Madam Speaker:** Well, the Hon. Member has been able to function in this House, as far as I can see, and therefore I do not see at this point where there is a privilege.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**An Hon. Member:** Be reasonable!

**Madam Speaker:** Oh, I am terribly reasonable.

**An Hon. Member:** What about the security in my office?

**Madam Speaker:** Order, order. However, I will investigate all the facts, even the ones concerning the possible mutilation of some precious sculpture.

● (1510)

I have notice of a question of privilege in the name of the Hon. Member for York-Peel (Mr. Stevens).

MR. STEVENS—REVISED BUDGET TABLES ALLEGED MISLEADING

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Madam Speaker, if I may, I would like to refer you to two rulings or at least comments, one by yourself and one by your predecessor. I refer first to December 12, 1979, when at page 2287 of *Hansard* the then Speaker said:

There is a very clear rule which was enunciated by one of my most distinguished predecessors, former Speaker Michener, that to accuse a Member of this House of misconduct in any way, and to expect that that accusation can be sent to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for investigation and examination, the allegation of misconduct by a Member will have to be clear.

In the course of my remarks, Madam Speaker, I hope I will meet that requirement. Secondly, I would direct your attention to page 12898 of *Hansard* for November 18, 1981. When dealing with a question of privilege you stated:

—it is in that respect that a formal charge must be made.

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Would the Hon. Member tell me, before he quotes all of these precedents, what his question of privilege is all about?

**Mr. Stevens:** Yes, Madam Speaker. I will be showing you that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) on budget night misled Members of this House. He was, I suggest, in contempt of Parliament as a result of what he tabled. I will be suggesting that he breached his oath of secrecy, that he limited my ability and that of other MPs to join in the budget debate itself, and as such I will suggest that there has indeed been a breach of the privileges of this House.

If you find that I have at least a prima facie case, Madam Speaker, I propose to move that the tabling in the House of Commons on Tuesday, April 19, of a fiscal plan by the Minister of Finance in a significantly altered version of the printed version of that fiscal plan be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for scrutiny and report back to this House.

**Madam Speaker:** I just want to warn the Hon. Member that this question of privilege resembles very much one that was dealt with previously in the House. The Hon. Member quoted part of my ruling where I made it quite clear that if the Hon. Member wanted to charge the Minister with the things he is now mentioning, it is not the right procedure to use a question of privilege to do it. There are other procedures which can be used in order to give the Hon. Member satisfaction on his grievance or desire to lay charges against the Minister, and he must use that route. I think I must remind Hon. Members that no Member of this House can be charged in a like way in his duties as a Member unless the Hon. Member who is making the charge is prepared to do it on a substantive motion. This is quite understandable because we cannot be throwing accusations at each other without using the proper procedure which will allow the House to investigate completely.

So I urge the Hon. Member in his presentation to stay very much within the line of what might be his question of privilege. If it is something else, I will have to interrupt him and not allow him to pursue it.

**Mr. Stevens:** Madam Speaker, you will recall that yesterday I gave notice at the conclusion of Question Period that I would likely be raising a question of privilege. In the meantime we have researched, both from a procedural standpoint and from an actual standpoint, what the documentation in fact represented. I think if you will be patient with me I will be able to outline clearly to you that I have indeed a question of privilege, that I am only trying, if you like, to anticipate the arguments you might otherwise raise against me in my anxiety to have you hear me out on something that I think is one of the most fundamental questions of privilege which has ever been raised in this House.

As a precedent, I refer you to a question of privilege raised in this House on February 28, 1979, which was subsequently debated that day and through to March 1, 1979. There you will find that the changing of a tabled document was very much the focal point of the question. My question of privilege is, however, significantly different in the sense that not only do we have a changing of the fiscal plan I have referred to, but we also have a document circulated—presumably at the request of the Minister and described as “Revised Budget Tables April 19, 1983”—in the lobbies of this House and I understand distributed across the country.

The significant point is that both I and other Members of this House were misled by the revised budget tables into thinking that what was filed at the Table was also revised to conform to the mimeographed pages being circulated in our lobby. The truth is that that did not happen. What happened was that there were various inked copies delivered by the Minister of Finance at the point of tabling to the Table, and on our examination of those copies which had been inked and in various ways altered, we found that they differed in the way