

hon. members cannot tell me in the first two or three sentences that they have a privilege, then I suppose the privilege does not exist. It has to be stated in the very beginning what the privilege is; then I hear hon. members. I then have the discretion to decide whether I feel there is a question of privilege or not, and I may interrupt the hon. member at that point or continue hearing him.

If the hon. member feels that I have not listened to him long enough and that he has something very important to tell me, will he please tell me what it is in the first two sentences.

Mr. Nowlan: Madam Speaker, with respect, when I stand on a question of privilege it has to be something important, especially something like this.

You yourself, in the chair, referred to the Kenora precedent where the member felt himself to be a victim and therefore moved a motion. You distinguished that from my rising on a question of privilege, when I feel victimized by knowing that if the facts of the hon. member for Leeds-Grenville (Mr. Cossitt) are correct—and I have to say “if” because I do not have the facts, and with respect, Madam Speaker, you cut off the hon. member for Leeds-Grenville before he established the facts. Quite frankly, we will most likely have to wait until tomorrow to see what some of the answers are. With respect, I could not sit idly by with, in effect, your ruling in part, after the President of the Privy Council laid red herrings all over this green chamber by raising this question of “Lay a charge or else suffer your seat.”

Your Honour referred to two precedents in England. We all know, unfortunately, that political morality in England in terms of principle is sometimes a little higher than in other chambers. It obviously is within the power of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to do something about this if the facts are correct.

On your own words, with respect, the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) felt he was victimized and he raised a motion. I say to you, Madam Speaker, that if another member on this side, and especially the hon. member for Leeds-Grenville, does not present a substantive motion, then if his facts are correct I will present a motion, because I feel just as victimized. In effect, there could very well have been a breach affecting my privilege as a member—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I think at this point I can interrupt the hon. member. He is speaking of two different privileges. He is speaking now of a privilege that he might have because he cannot make out in the discussion we have just had whether there has really been a breach of budget secrecy that would affect his privilege. It is all “iffy.” Is it or is it not?

Through the discussions that we have just had, can the member establish to me that his privilege has really been breached? That is quite different from the privilege of the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River to which we were referring whose actions were interpreted, if my memory serves me correctly, as having breached a secret of the budget. That is

Point of Order—Mr. Domm

quite different and I am afraid there is no equation between the two kinds of privileges.

I have heard the hon. member and I think I have been patient with him. We are not discussing this question under privilege any longer. I have said that it is not a question of privilege and the fact that he is now protesting that I did not listen to him long enough is not a question of privilege either.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, like you, I would not want to see an undesirable precedent find its way into our records. I do not think I heard you give credence to the submission of the government House leader when he stated that the practices of this place were that before a question of privilege could arise, a specific accusation had to be made. I have no quarrel with that part because many Speakers have ruled on it. You went on to say that embodied in that principle, if the charges proved to be unfounded, was that the member making those specific charges forfeited his seat.

Mr. Speaker Jerome and many Speakers before him have ruled that that is not part of our practices. It is not a convention. I personally had cause to go into that question very carefully myself in 1963. That is not part of our practices, Madam Speaker, and I hope I did not hear you say that it was.

Madam Speaker: I did not say that. I just agreed to the first part of the hon. member's intervention. What might happen afterwards, I suppose, is a matter of the personal ethics of the people involved in these incidents. It has nothing to do with the Speaker; it is a matter of personal ethics.

MR. DOMM—ALLEGED BREACH BY MINISTER OF BUDGET
SECRECY

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, I am interested in gaining from the Chair some clarification on a point of order dealing with the possibility of a leak of information that would prove to be, in my assessment, a very definite breach of privilege.

On November 10, as reported at 12704 of *Hansard*, when I rose on the question of privilege that we have been discussing today Your Honour did, in essence, according to your response, reserve judgment. I rose in the House on that date and put the following proposition to Your Honour:

If budget information is being prematurely passed on to certain individuals by the minister, information which Parliament must necessarily be advised of in the first instance by means of the budget speech of the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen), then the law of contempt of Parliament should clearly be cited and my rights as an individual member are surely being circumvented.

● (1540)

I refresh everyone's memory with Your Honour's response to my concern, because that gave me grounds to pursue this matter rather than having to stand up in this House, as the House leader for the government has stated, and lay a charge. Your Honour answered very specifically and said:

It is quite puzzling to me that most of the facts brought forward in the question of privilege seem to be of a hypothetical nature.