

West, is here and is prepared to deny that, and I deny that to the House. My colleague said he would proceed with measures contained in a budget that had been approved by the House and which did not take immediate effect, as some of the minister's measures did last night. That is quite a significant difference.

I believe, Madam Speaker, that this is the first procedural point of substance of which you have had to hear argument. I say to you, with the greatest respect, that I think we have travelled too far down the road to submit this House of Commons to ministerial convenience. Because the normal procedures were not followed in this case, our rights as members of Parliament, and the rights of the people we represent here, have been abrogated by the process that we saw last night. That is why the question of privilege was raised last night.

We received no formal notice of the budget speech that we would have under the proper rules. We have no automatic right of debate and reply: Mr. Deputy Speaker confirmed that for us last night. We cannot move an amendment. All of those rights are vested in us as MPs, under the budget process, for the protection of the people of the country, and those rights were abrogated by the process that was used by the Minister of Finance last night.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Last night, an economic direction was established for this country without the approval of the House of Commons. That is an abrogation of the right of Parliament and the right of the people. The fact that the minister was afraid to face all of the country's problems in this budget does not mean that a new direction has not been established. It has been established.

If we allow this, Madam Speaker, what next? What else are we going to have? What other kinds of attempts are we going to have to abrogate the rights of members and the public? We will end up hearing a full-scale budgetary address after the House leader moves a motion "that this House notes with interest the economic remarks of the Minister of Finance", if this keeps on. The necessity of following the provisions of Standing Order 60 at any time is on the verge of being annihilated by the processes that we saw last night. I do not think it is an auspicious beginning for the government House leader to have given that kind of advice to the Minister of Finance.

The House is piling precedent upon precedent to remove from its members the right to vote general approval of budgetary policy. Last night, the precedent—if it is a precedent, and I hope it is not—the attempt at establishing a precedent was a giant leap forward in the abrogation of the rights of members of Parliament in terms of the budgetary process.

I think this is a very serious question. I have argued it at some length. I do not want it to end there; I do not think it should end there. I am, therefore, proposing the following motion:

*Privilege—Mr. W. Baker*

That the matter of the erosion of the rights of the House of Commons to approve the general budgetary policy of the government, particularly as revealed in the procedure followed by the Minister of Finance in his presentation to the House on Monday, April 21, 1980, during the debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

That motion is seconded by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). This is a question and a matter that should be stopped, and it should be stopped now. There are budgetary processes that could have been observed by the Minister of Finance. If the Minister of Finance had been doing his job in terms of the economic problems facing this country, we would not have had this pirating of the process: we would have had a budget, a real budget, with real protection, with all of the rights and privileges of hon. members observed, and the public protected with all of the statements that were made long before now.

At this point we have this trampling on the procedures of this House, which are there for good reason, for the sake of allowing the minister to avoid his responsibilities to the public of Canada. I do not think this could be allowed to happen in this House of Commons. Therefore, I move my motion for the consideration of the House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I conclude that the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) is describing my statement last night as a budget. The hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie), over television, said it was not a budget last night. He said it was not a mini-budget.

**Mr. Crosbie:** Minnie Mouse.

**Mr. MacEachen:** He said it was a Minnie Mouse statement. The two frontbenchers are sitting so close together I will not repeat the description of unity which the hon. member for St. John's West described during the campaign that existed between his leader and himself; but surely these two frontbenchers, sitting so close together, should decide what it was. The hon. member for Nepean-Carleton says it is a budget, and the finance critic says it is not. I agree with the finance critic on that matter. I want in a sense to review with the House the situation which I faced in becoming Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Crosbie:** This is a sob story.

**Mr. MacEachen:** It is not a sob story unless one would weep at the deficiencies of the former minister.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Crosbie:** Which one?

**Mr. MacEachen:** The situation that I faced was that there were ways and means motions which had been tabled in the House by the former minister of finance that had not yet received parliamentary approval.

**Mr. Nielsen:** They died.