

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** First of all, Madam Speaker, I would like to emphasize that in no case will there be an additional 18 cents tax as proposed in last year's Progressive Conservative budget. In other words, Canadian consumers now pay and will pay throughout 1980, 18 cents less a gallon than they would have paid under a Progressive Conservative administration, and that is a minimum.

As regards the coming years, we recall that the Progressive Conservatives intended to raise petroleum prices in 1983-84 to 75 per cent and 85 per cent of world prices. Once again petroleum prices for gas consumers in Canada will be very much lower than what was proposed in the Progressive Conservative budget of December 11 last.

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[English]

### PRIVILEGE

MR. CLARK—ADVERTISEMENT SPONSORED BY PUBLICATIONS  
CANADA—RULING BY MADAM SPEAKER

**Madam Speaker:** On Friday, October 17, 1980, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) raised a question of privilege. As he said in his presentation, it is a little more specific than the one raised October 9 last by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath).

The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition directs the Chair's attention to two extracts from the government publication entitled "The Canadian Constitution 1980" and submits that they are false within the meaning of that expression as used in my ruling of October 19 last.

Members will appreciate that the expression "false" is subject to but one interpretation in the *House of Commons Debates*, that is, pejorative, and it is considered unparliamentary when referring to another hon. member. While the word has less sinister meanings, in the context of contempt, it seems to me that to amount to contempt, representations or statements about our proceedings or of the participation of members should not only be erroneous or incorrect, but, rather, should be purposely untrue and improper and import a ring of deceit. To be false in the context of contempt, an interpretation of our proceedings must be an obviously, purposely distorted one. I am supported in this respect by the fact that the House interprets the expression "false" only in the pejorative sense where used in debate.

My role, therefore, is to interpret the extracts of the document in question not in terms of their substance, but to find whether, on their face, they represent such a distorted interpretation of the events or remarks in our proceedings that they obviously attract the characterization of false.

I cannot find that they attract that characterization and accordingly must find that there is no question of privilege.

### Privilege—Mr. Beatty

MR. BEATTY—ENERGY ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN—RULING BY  
MADAM SPEAKER

**Madam Speaker:** The hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty) raised a question of privilege on Tuesday, October 21, 1980, in which he alleges that a document entitled "National Energy Policy—Communications", written by a public servant, sets out a major energy advertising policy by the government in order to, in the words of the hon. member, "seize control of the energy debate", and he further alleges "that the energy advertising campaign currently being run by the government was, in fact, designed to interfere with our deliberations through spending public money".

The hon. member appreciates that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) has, however, pointed out that the thrust of that document was rejected by the government and therefore its contents, at least, do not reflect government policy. Be that as it may, if the campaign or the document referred to by the hon. member nevertheless included a design to interfere with our deliberations so as to constitute a violation of our privilege, that could constitute a *prima facie* case of privilege. The hon. member is reminded that on Friday, October 17 last, in my remarks recorded at page 3781, of *Hansard*, I also added that the interference in question "must be such that the member of the House is truly hindered or intimidated".

The principle governing whether a parliamentary privilege is violated is set out in the words of a committee of privileges of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom as follows:

The nature and extent of any particular privilege claimed by Parliament has to be considered in relation to the circumstances of the time, the underlying test in all cases being, whether the right claimed as a privilege is one which is absolutely necessary for the due execution of the powers of Parliament—

Therefore, all interferences with members' privileges of freedom of speech, such as editorials and other public comment, are not breaches of privilege even though they influence the conduct of members in their parliamentary work. In the words of another committee of privileges of that House—and I quote:

Not every action by an outside body which may influence the conduct of a member of Parliament as such could now be regarded as a breach of privilege, even if it were calculated and intended to bring pressure on the member to take or to refrain from taking a particular course.

And as another committee of privileges of that House observed in its report:

—the House has always asserted that any attempt by improper means to influence a member in his parliamentary conduct is a breach of privilege—

● (1510)

What constitutes an improper means of interfering with members' parliamentary work is always a question depending on the facts of each case.

Hon. members will appreciate that there must, first of all, be some connection between the material alleged to contain the interference and the parliamentary proceeding. In this regard, there is little, if any, evidence before me relating either the documents or the advertising campaign to a parliamentary proceeding.