

one had taken it upon themselves to inform me that the federal government was in any way involved in this project. Indeed, Madam Speaker, when the chairman of the occasion on Saturday morning turned to introduce me and invite me to comment, he was rather embarrassed because he did not know whether I was enabled to speak on behalf of the government or not. He presumed that I was not, but he was rather embarrassed at having to introduce the Member of Parliament for that area and I was rather embarrassed to find that I knew very little about this project. In fact, I learned from an official of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation that the project was totally financed by CMHC funding by way of a low-interest loan to the extent of \$4 million.

The point I would like to make, Madam Speaker, is that if we are to have this new process, I think it is a question that must be addressed very thoroughly when the matter comes before the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. If we are to have this process, then the whole matter of dialogue has to be in the form of a two-way street, because I think, aside from my expectation of the right to question my minister in this House, that minister should also be prepared to come to me and seek advice; and that could make his job, as representative of my constituents, much more simple.

In particular, he should take upon himself the responsibility to advise me of functions he is attending in my riding, as my ministerial representative was supposed to attend two weeks ago when he was invited to speak by the Fraser Educational Foundation on the question of salmon enhancement in the Fraser River, Madam Speaker; to address the members of the Chamber of Commerce in my riding on a subject for which I am spokesman for my own party and to which I am not even invited. The hon. minister, who is not even elected to this House, who speaks for the whole of British Columbia—the House leader in the other place—was to come into my riding, but in fact he never came. He apparently was called back to Ottawa on urgent business and, instead, sent a tape-recorded message via telephone.

The point I make, Madam Speaker, is that I could have been there, I should have been there, and I certainly should have been made aware of the fact that this honourable, non-elected minister in my riding was to be in my riding presenting a speech which, in fact, he never gave.

Madam Speaker, this is the point I would like to make. It is a matter of attitude. I think members of the cabinet, if they really want to establish improved contact with all the constituencies that elect members, from whatever party, to represent them in Ottawa ought to have an opportunity to have access to that minister, and that minister should seek their advice.

I raised the question of the political link a few moments ago, Madam Speaker—I will be finished in a moment—but, in fact, a week or two ago I learned that the former Liberal candidate in my riding had been appointed a commissioner of the North Fraser Harbours Commission. He was defeated, not once but twice, and he has received his due reward. I do not deny this member of the Liberal Party access to a cushy government appointment, but I would at least think I should

have been consulted before that former candidate—who happened to have been defeated in two successive federal elections—was granted this appointment to the North Fraser Harbours Commission when, in fact, the north arm of the Fraser River represents one boundary and an important source of commerce within my riding.

Then, Madam Speaker, the previous Liberal candidate to that, who also ran against me and was defeated three elections ago, on his defeat was appointed to a very comfortable assignment with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Madam Speaker, I am the member for that riding and happen to have been fortunate enough to be elected to this side of the House. At the very least I would have expected my views on that individual ought to have been sought, even if the government chose to disregard them.

The Prime Minister speaks of making government and making this Parliament more available to all Canadians, and that is as it should be. But I want to be consulted if we are going to have another bureaucratic tier within the political system. I at least want to believe that it is a two-way street, and I certainly want to have assurance, Madam Speaker, that that minister is not going to have special mailing privileges into my riding, financed by the taxpayers of Canada. After all, the government already enjoys a loaded deck by way of its tremendous advertising budget, some \$30 million, we now learn, in relation to the proposed constitutional advertising program.

Will these ministers have an advertising budget, if they are non-elected and not accessible in this House? Do we have some means of questioning them? Will they continue the practice of having their photographs taken and placed on the front page of my local newspaper, handing over a cheque to the people? Why cannot Members of Parliament, of whatever party, be part of the process? Let us not call it patronage, Madam Speaker; let us call it serving our constituency, and let us give the elected Members of Parliament an opportunity to participate in that service and at least to be advised by the appropriate government minister when there is to be an announcement or a sod-turning or an appointment made in the riding for which we are responsible. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Does the hon. member for Yukon wish to speak?

Mr. Nielsen: Yes, I do.

Madam Speaker: On the basis that he says he has a new dimension to this question, I would like to hear him.

• (1710)

He has indicated to me on a point of order that he wishes to bring a new dimension to this problem. I would like to hear it before I determine whether I am sufficiently informed. I do not know what other members who are rising have to say about this question, but I want to note that arguments are being repeated. Since arguments are now becoming repetitive,