

*Point of Order—Mr. Riis*

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I have not had an opportunity to mention this to the House Leader of the Government nor the Official Opposition. I would like to have had more time, but basically the point I wish to make is that on Thursday the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) rose in his place on a question of privilege. Presumably, if you were to find a prima facie case of privilege, it would be referred to the appropriate committee.

He made his comments in a very thorough and articulate way. While some of us do not necessarily support them, he had the right to make those comments and in many respects he could argue that his privileges had been breached as a Minister.

The representatives from the Official Opposition made their points and suggested that if a case was in fact identified by you, Mr. Speaker, it would be referred to the appropriate committee. We in the New Democratic Party made similar arguments. There were a number of points of privilege, depending on one's perception of the events of last week. We were arguing for some aspect of points of privilege relating to the leaking of information from the Budget. The Minister was concerned. We were concerned. We suggested there was a list of items to consider. I have a list of items that I identified over the weekend which should be raised at the committee if you find a prima facie case of privilege.

• (1110)

We have been arguing that a point of privilege occurred for individual Members and have asked that it be referred to an appropriate standing committee. Perhaps, since we unanimously agree, that is what should take place. That would enable us to continue with the business of the House, knowing full well that all aspects of the points of privilege raised would be done in the appropriate standing committee.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to matters of privilege, there is technically no such thing as a point of personal privilege. When a Member raises something that pertains to himself or herself, he or she is actually dealing with the privileges of the House. Therefore, even though there are a number of notices with respect to points of privilege before you, and technically you may have only called one for discussion to enable you to make the ruling on it, there has been put before you already a wide range of arguments

as to why there has been a prima facie case of breach of privilege.

Certainly the speech given by the Leader of the Liberal Party is one he would have given if his notice had been recognized first. I do not want to hold anybody back from making arguments they want to make before you, but as far as the Liberals are concerned, we would like you to take into account the arguments that have been made irrespective as to which point of privilege has been raised first or is technically before you. We ask you to consider whether there has been a prima facie case of breach of privilege, whether we are looking at the point of privilege raised by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), the one that would have been raised by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) or by other Members. Should you find a prima facie case of breach of privilege, the Liberals are prepared to move an appropriate motion.

However, one should not assume that our motion would simply be to send the matter to a parliamentary committee. It is open for a motion based on a prima facie case of breach of privilege to ask the House to take certain action. We reserve the right to move such a motion in addition to or as an alternative to having this matter looked at by a committee.

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, the suggestion of the House Leader of the New Democratic Party is a helpful one. I also hear the comments of the House Leader for the Official Opposition. Let me make a couple of points if I may.

The Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) rose at the first opportunity and indicated to the House that his privileges had been breached. He made a point of privilege. While I have been a Member of this House, there have been instances where a Member came to the House on a point of privilege rather than a question of privilege. We should preserve that ability for Members to stand in their place and make comment. I had to do it on one occasion. We should keep that option open. The Finance Minister did not at the time suggest a motion. It would be helpful to have this matter studied properly by a committee, one might very well suggest that the appropriate committee would be the Elections and Procedures Committee. We may find that a more appropriate committee would be the Finance Committee. I raise that as a possibility.