

or not there has to be some change made in the whole approach.

I understand and appreciate the reason behind the secrecy. As the Hon. Member pointed out, it is so that some groups or some people will not make windfall gains by having premature knowledge of what is going to take place at budget time. That is an important point. However, the point I would like to bring forward is that when the tradition began hundreds of years ago it was done without an Act of Parliament but was accepted in the Parliamentary process not only in our country and other Commonwealth countries, because at that time the possibility of having secrecy broken by modern technological means was not present. Today it is very important to look at the possibility of keeping secret something like the budget, and whether or not a Minister, depending on what Government he happens to be with, would be expected to resign simply because some reporter somewhere found something that gave him a little piece of information that he was able to demonstrate prior to the actual reading of the budget. We had two instances of it in our country this year. Concerning the Ontario budget, there was a form of a leak made around the fact that someone had found some discarded printing material and was able to get some information about the budget. In the incident that was mentioned with regard to the motion, a television cameraman with a zoom lens was able to pick a little bit off the budget that was being shown during a photo session. I believe that everyone in the House and people in general now realize how difficult it is to keep something absolutely secret. Technology and the availability of machines and instruments which extend the possibility of hearing and seeing, extend the senses about something that formerly could not possibly have been imagined when the whole process of secrecy was introduced.

● (1540)

My own reaction to the event when it took place, the question that came immediately to my mind, concerned the morality of the media when it comes to a situation like this where, by a fluke or because there is an instrument of which the other person is not aware, one is able to get a small piece of information that can be blown up into what becomes an incident. It seems to me, with my own background of working in the church, and to many others who have similar professions, doctors, lawyers, ministers, priests and teachers, that it has been taken for granted that many things we do will be kept secret. People expect and demand that a person like myself and many others, and all of us, I suspect, in some instances, will keep information secret. I can think of many things in my life about which I have information which could be found by someone who really wanted to find it by getting into my files and looking at my notes, and I keep extensive notes.

Someone could use machinery or technical equipment to listen to a conversation in my office, or could tap my telephone or do many other things. I would say that if any of those devices were to be used and information gained made public afterwards, it would be morally wrong. So I question the morality of someone in the media who, because of a similar accident or intended accident, is able to procure material that

is secret and is able to turn it into an incident afterward, to the embarrassment of some person. I think it is wrong. I do not think that is covering news in the way people expect news to be covered.

Just a few days ago I read of a recent incident in the United States concerning someone who was able to procure the pre-medical examinations to be written by students coming from other countries. As Hon. Members know, if someone is able to find the answers to that kind of an exam prior to the examination, one's odds of passing will naturally be much higher than those of people who must use their own knowledge. I understand that as much as \$10 million was made from this event. People from various countries were able to get the answers to the exam prior to writing it, which finally meant that the exams had to be written all over again. I do not think anyone would question me on my belief that that is wrong. It would also be illegal, I suspect, to steal that kind of knowledge and sell it so that someone else would benefit.

I appreciate the fact that what took place at the time of the budget is not a case exactly parallel to stealing of exams. Nevertheless, I suggest that the media should somehow examine its conscience concerning all the news that it prints about an incident like this, as to who finally benefits from the embarrassment of the Government. But how much restriction should the Government have to use? What is the human dimension that is required of someone to keep a secret in a place like this? I would say that at certain times in history it was not that difficult. If someone did let a secret out, there was greater responsibility than today, especially when technological machines are being used to acquire the information. If someone gives his colleague a note or makes a vocal statement prior to the budget, letting out a piece of information himself simply by not caring, that is different. But when it comes right down to seeking out, with earnestness, information that obviously has not been intentionally put out, then I question that morality.

I think it would be proper for the House of Commons or representatives of the committee such as that proposed by the Hon. Member for St. John's West, to question the level of secrecy that must be demanded and the morality involved in seeking information when it is still supposed to be secret. I would like to see such a committee struck.

At budget time it is much more important to have serious consultation by groups across the country that will be affected by the budget to find out exactly what people are thinking and saying about the economics of the country, about labour, business, senior citizens, hospitals and universities. It is more important to look for more information to make a just budget, than it is to make the whole point of it a secret. The value of the research and preparation on a much broader spectrum is more important than the final, total, absolute secrecy, and keeping the secrecy with these new machines is next to impossible when the possibility of them being broken is so much greater.

The New Democrats would support in general the motion that has been proposed by the Hon. Member for St. John's