

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I have been asked a question and I think I should be entitled to answer it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: When I am asked a question and I refuse to try to answer by shouting through their noise, they say I sit down and sulk. When I stand up and try to get silence, they shout, "Go and get a dissolution". I will tell them, I will go and get a dissolution—maybe right now.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PRIVILEGE

MR. BROADBENT—ALLEGED LEAK OF BUDGET DETAILS

Mr. Speaker: On April 10, the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) raised, by way of a question of privilege, a story which appeared in the Toronto *Star* on April 8 indicating the sales tax proposal to be included in the budget. On April 11, after the budget had been presented, the matter was pursued further by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby and at that time he made reference to stories in the Toronto *Star* of April 7 and 8 and on CTV National News on April 9 respecting sales tax changes and, in the CTV broadcast, changes in research and development benefits for corporations.

In the debate that followed the minister explained his position with respect to the negotiations with the provincial governments preceding the budget and denied the possibility of a leak of budget information respecting the sales tax through his office or his officials. The House, of course, accepts his word on that.

Moreover, the minister made it clear that there was ample room for speculation with respect to research and development benefits, for this subject had been discussed at the recent first ministers' conference. However, the actual budgetary proposals respecting research and development benefits were different than those which had been considered.

To deal first with the narrow point of the notice given by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby on April 10, that is, on the sales tax issue hon. members may wish to refer in this connection to the words which appear at page 4382 of *Hansard* on April 11.

● (1512)

In addition to those, it seems to me that the matter has been disposed of in a complete way, as far as this House is concerned, by the minister's explanation that he was not able to discover and did not take any responsibility in any way for any leak of budgetary information.

On the broader issue which came out in subsequent argument, but prior to the offering of the motion by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby, that is to say, the general matter of budgetary secretary which would, of course, include the research and development benefits as well as the sales tax

Point of Order—Mr. S. Knowles

reductions, I must express some serious doubt whether the conventional budgetary secrecy falls within the area of privilege at all. Certainly the two British precedents upon which the hon. member relied heavily in putting forward his argument, and which were cited by him, were not dealt with through that means but by ordinary notices of motions, one of which was in fact put down by the government after the minister responsible had admitted his complicity in a budgetary leak.

The second, which was not accompanied by a similar admission by a minister, was a motion which, although put down by a private member, enjoyed a certain priority of debate because the government indicated in the circumstances that it would not oppose the motion. In other words, in both circumstances the House brought itself to examine this matter of its own volition in a way entirely independent of the procedures related to privilege in the ordinary way, and therefore I cannot accept that there is a precedent which argues that the general matter of budgetary leaks falls within a question of privilege. I do not, of course, say that they cannot do so. I simply say that in the circumstances here it would seem to fall somewhat in line with these precedents which did not treat them as privilege in those circumstances.

Finally, even if these precedents had persuaded me that this was a matter which ought to be dealt with in a preliminary way under privilege, which they do not, I would have some difficulty with the rather general nature of the motion because I think hon. members will realize that in similar circumstances in the past general motions under privilege have proposed that "this matter" or the general question of a certain circumstance be referred to a committee somewhat under the assumption that the committee would perfect the investigation and come to some conclusions as to whether or not in fact a matter of privilege existed. General motions of that sort, without specific accusations, have been rejected by the Chair. Therefore, even if I were to accept the fact that these precedents place this matter within the area of privilege, which I do not, I would have some difficulty on a procedural ground in that regard. Therefore, for those reasons I am not able to find in the matter put forward by the hon. member a subject of privilege which I think should take priority over other business of the House.

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POINTS OF ORDER

MR. KNOWLES (WINNIPEG NORTH CENTRE)—REPLIES BY PRIME MINISTER DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising out of the last words of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) before he left the House. The Prime Minister contended that when he was asked a question, he had the right to answer. No one quarrels with that, but I suggest that he does not have the right to make a series of long speeches in the question period, with the result that many questioners are denied the right to ask other questions of the Prime Minister or other ministers. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that