

I think hon. members would want me to thank those people who have worked hard to translate *Hansard* so that we can have it.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### PRESENCE OF SECURITY GUARDS BEHIND CURTAINS IN CHAMBER

**Madam Speaker:** I have another statement about security guards. I have been made aware of the presence of security guards behind the curtains, and I have initiated an inquiry as to why they were positioned there, and for what reason. I will want to investigate that matter thoroughly and report to the House as soon as I can.

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## PRIVILEGE

### MR. BEATTY—ENERGY ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

**Madam Speaker:** I have before me a question of privilege which is not completed; I deferred it for two days. As I said the other day in the House, after having read the statements of the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty), I wanted to ascertain whether the Chair needed to be further informed on that particular question of privilege.

I found in the statement of the hon. member that indeed he had pursued the government for the substance of a document written by a public servant, and also for the substance of campaign ads on energy. But, he did not really relate the substance of these documents to the specific matter of parliamentary privilege. Therefore, I should like to hear the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), and I should like to ask him if he would try, for my guidance and in order to be helpful to the House, to relate more closely the substance of those documents and those ads to the matter of parliamentary privilege, so that I may be able to establish whether there is a prima facie case of privilege.

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon):** Madam Speaker, you no doubt saw, at the same time as I rose when this matter was first raised by the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty), that the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) was also rising to participate in the argument before you.

I have discussed this matter with the hon. member for St. John's East, and in the interest of saving the time of the House on this question, he will be speaking for both of us.

**Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Madam Speaker, I will endeavour to be brief because some of my colleagues have other matters of considerable urgency which they wish to raise.

### *Privilege—Mr. Beatty*

Very briefly, the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty) bears a certain similarity to a question of privilege which I raised earlier, on which Your Honour has ruled and to which Your Honour has alluded, as well as the question of privilege raised by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark). What concerns us is the narrow interpretation by the Chair of privilege in so far as the use of intimidation is concerned.

It would be my argument, with great respect, if Your Honour were to view the arguments presented by my colleague and indeed by myself on previous occasions in that context, that we now have a new dimension in this country which has a direct bearing and influence upon our proceedings in this House. That new dimension is the mass media and the access of the Government of Canada to that mass media, indeed the access we have as a Parliament to the mass media through the use of television cameras now in this House.

● (1210)

You will recall, Madam Speaker, that when my colleague presented his question of privilege he referred to a memorandum which had been issued by a senior official of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. That memorandum referred to the debate which would take place in the House on energy policy, and I quote from that memorandum:

The underlying strategy in this communications plan is to achieve three goals, in sequence:

1. Take control of the energy debate.
2. Retain that control through action and leadership.
3. Remove "energy" from the list of highranking national concerns.

Now, we know there has been the sum of some \$5.6 million already spent on a campaign to take control of the debate. We also know that one of the target groups of that advertising campaign is the official opposition, so identified in the memo.

It has been argued by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) that the memo was not accepted. But we know from the public record, by the person who wrote the memo, that we do not know what parts of the strategy contained in the memo had in fact been accepted by the government and implemented, because he refused to state this directly in reply to a question put to him in an interview. It seems to me that if the government is to be permitted, through the use of public funds, voted by this House, to gain control of a debate through the manipulation of the mass media, with the official opposition as one of the target groups, in my opinion is a serious breach of the privileges of this House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McGrath:** That is just as much intimidation as we had in the past where a member could be physically intimidated by one means or another. The means of intimidation are now through the manipulation of the media by the government, and the control which the media could exercise on public opinion and, hence, on the members of this House as a target group in terms of the government "taking control of the debate". I believe that is a very serious matter. I believe that it has