

● (1510)

When I wrote to Your Honour this morning to indicate my intention to raise this matter this afternoon, I sent Your Honour a copy of a document entitled "National Energy Policy, Communications". This memorandum outlines a possible federal advertising campaign on energy. Mr. Donald Hanright, who is the director of communications with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, has admitted publicly that he is the author of that document, so its authenticity is not in doubt.

I draw the attention of the House to page 3 of the paper which, under the title "Strategy", reads as follows:

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 high-ranking national concerns.

The purpose of this campaign was very clear. The government was to embark on a major advertising campaign to seize control of the energy debate—

Mr. Lalonde: On a point of order, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Nielsen: You cannot have order in the middle of a question of privilege.

Mr. Lalonde: On a point of order, I suggest to the hon. member that he take note also of something which happened in this House and that Mr. Hanright, whom the hon. member has quoted, has also said—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Hanright declared that this minister had rejected—

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I do not see readily what hon. members are protesting about. It seems to me, and I stand to be corrected if I interpret the standing orders wrongly, that a point of order can be raised at any time when a member is addressing the House. That is exactly what the hon. minister asked for. I recognized him, which seems perfectly normal to me. Has the hon. minister concluded his point of order?

[*English*]

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, my point is very brief indeed, and it is in relation to something the hon. member has just stated. He quoted a senior official of my department. I submit to him that he is being quite unfair to this particular senior official because the same senior official indicated, when he was interviewed on this subject, that his memorandum had been rejected by his minister. Therefore, it would be quite inappropriate for the hon. member—

Mr. Clark: Show us the new one, Marc.

Privilege—Mr. Beatty

Mr. Lalonde:—to refer to this document on a very partial basis and not to quote or refer fully to the statement made by the senior official in question. I stated in this House myself that this document had been rejected by me.

Mr. Beatty: Madam Speaker, it is regrettable that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) felt it necessary to smuggle in a speech on the merits of the resolution under the guise of a point of order. It was clearly not a point of order.

It is very clear that the purpose of this campaign is that the government is to embark on a major advertising campaign to seize control of the energy debate and to, in the words of the document, "remove 'energy' from the list of high-ranking national concerns". It would be bad enough if such an action were targeted strictly at the government's opponents in the private sector. Spending vast amounts of public money to polish the government's image and to eliminate public concern over an issue which has reached crisis proportions for the whole industrialized world would in itself be extremely dangerous and disturbing. The document makes it clear, however, that the targets of the advertising campaign are not strictly in the private sector. They also include members of this House.

Let me read a paragraph from page 3 under the heading "Taking Control".

Federal 'control' will be suddenly, forcefully gained with announcement of the 'package'. This, however, will be a lumpy, almost indigestible mass of policy. Unless that initiative is retained by merchandising both the package and its individual elements, and existing programs in the fields of supply, allocation and conservation, that initiative will go by default to the inevitable detractors (including a largely hostile media, the producing provinces, the foreign-owned multinationals, and the Opposition).

What must be noted here is that Mr. Hanright is not talking about the government's opponents in the abstract. He is referring very directly and very specifically to the opposition in Parliament, as his decision to capitalize the word "opposition" makes very clear. How are the government's opponents, including the opposition in Parliament, to be out-manoeuvred under Mr. Hanright's proposals? One element, as Mr. Hanright pointed out, will be the announcement of an energy package which, according to the government, will come with the unveiling of the budget of the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) next Tuesday. The other element will be a massive advertising campaign to sell those initiatives.

Under the heading "Retaining Control", Mr. Hanright described the difficulty the government would have in obtaining sufficient favourable attention for its initiatives this fall. He continued:

In any event, these matters are relative. For potential opponents, the timing is even worse, provided we build on the initial communications advantage by continuously selling the federal position through the late summer, fall and winter. These detractors will be disadvantaged by surprise, encumbered by the necessity of applauding many of the policy initiatives, and possibly even non-plussed by our own noisy charivari.

It is clear that the targets of the campaign include members of the House of Commons. It is obvious that the period being referred to here is the present time leading up to and following the unveiling of the government's energy package. In these two