

**Mr. Crosbie:** Madam Speaker, I will outside. I will try to counsel the President of the Treasury Board outside. I cannot do it in this place because I do not want to be too lengthy.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Crosbie:** Madam Speaker, I would like to proceed with my reading of this article:

In Britain, at least two ministers have had to resign as a result of breaches in the security curtain. In the case of Hugh Dalton, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1947, a "premature and unpremeditated disclosure" was made to a newspaperman shortly before the budget was to be presented.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I do have to be enlightened on this question of privilege. I would ask the hon. member to answer this question. If it is true, and the hon. member is exposing facts whereby ministers have had to resign because of some breach in the rules which apply to members of the government, in the case he is citing, did this hon. minister also resign from the House? What we are discussing here are breaches in the rules of the House, not of government procedure or administrative procedure. We are speaking of the rules of this House. I would like the hon. member to address himself to that point. If the minister he mentioned resigned from the cabinet, that is one thing. But I would like to know if, as a consequence, he had to resign from the House.

**Mr. Crosbie:** Madam Speaker, in the particular case of Mr. Hugh Dalton, he did not resign from the House, he resigned from the cabinet, as should a gentleman who understands the parliamentary system. Because his breach of the privileges of Parliament was unpremeditated, he was not required to resign his seat. Mr. Dalton was on his way into the House at that time and he bumped into a newspaperman whom he knew. He just happened to make a remark which tipped off the newspaperman as to a certain tax which was to go up. He was not required to resign his seat.

It would be up to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections to decide whether the President of the Treasury Board should resign his seat as a member of the House.

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

**Mr. Crosbie:** I would hope that they would exercise some discretion or mercy in that respect. I would not want to have the hon. gentleman resign his seat in the House if he now makes a clear breast of the matter and promises not to do it again. But, yes, from the cabinet he should go.

● (1600)

I should just like to conclude my quotation from this document. The following page reads:

It would seem evident that if any information about government activity in the fields of planning, development, investment, etc. becomes known to private individuals, large profits could be made.

That is why this secrecy is so important. It continues:

Governments take particular precautions to maintain the secrecy of the budget, of their fiscal changes, and of changes in the bank rate.

#### *Privilege—Mr. W. Baker*

The estimates which are to be introduced to this House are fiscal changes. They are clearly within the rules set out in the document cited by my hon. friend and also in the report of the departmental committee which sat in London in 1972.

Also I should like to refer to a precedent in our own House. Just after I brought down the budget on December 11, 1979, which brought down the House, a question of privilege was raised with respect to an alleged budgetary leak. I should like to refer Your Honour to the Wednesday, December 12, 1979, edition of *Hansard* at page 2283 where the now Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) raised a question of privilege. He said:

Such practice is based on the principle that no individual, whoever he may be, must know in advance the details of a budget which he could use for personal gains.

I submit that the budget is a budgetary process. The details of expenditures, the total government spending, the amount of the deficit for the coming year, what the interest charges are to be on the budget, what the government's fiscal stance is, are they really practising restraint or not, are they following what they said in the budget, are all part of the same process.

Then the minister alleged that there was a leak of information in connection with the budget in a CTV broadcast. He went on in his remarks to deal with that situation. Then he moved the following motion:

That the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections be instructed to investigate the advance knowledge by journalists and others of measures to be proposed in the budget, including proposed changes in corporate and commodity taxes, in advance of the delivery of the budget—

That was the essence of his motion. Here we are discussing knowledge by journalists and others. We know who the others are; there are thousands of others who had advance knowledge of measures proposed in the estimates of this government, a large part of the budget.

Also on that question of privilege, as the minister of finance of the day, I naturally spoke in response to that motion. I said that I did not take any responsibility for any leak of budgetary information, and in fact there was no leak. That was my response to that question of privilege. It was a flat statement of fact that there was no leak, and I would take no responsibility for it because there had not been a leak.

Your Honour's predecessor made a decision, as reported at page 2287 of *Hansard*. He said:

When the Minister of Finance at any time stands in his place and says, as he has said today, that there is no leak, that he has examined and attempted to discover whether there was and finds none, and therefore does not take responsibility for one and, furthermore, disputes the fact that one in fact took place, that word must be accepted.

That is not the situation here. We have a situation here where the President of the Treasury Board cannot stand in his place and say there is no leak. He cannot do that. There has been a gigantic leak. It is not a leak; it is a veritable flood. The news media of this country was given all of this information before the House was given it. So he cannot say that there is no leak. There was a leak from 3.45 yesterday afternoon and subsequent to that. There was a leak which, the news media alleged, was aided and abetted by the government House leader who, they say, gave them permission to go ahead at 6.40