

tomorrow in turn to raise a question of privilege on this matter.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in respect of the point raised by the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Broadbent). I have two observations to make. The first is, of course, that the budget itself has not yet been presented, and it is impossible to talk about a budget leak at this stage. The second point is that the hon. member has based his comments and his intention to rise on a question of privilege on two British cases. As the hon. member will recall, the former minister of finance often raised the appropriateness of the traditional, so-called, budget secrecy.

Obviously the concept of secrecy that surrounds the budget has evolved, and must evolve if a minister of finance, in the modern context, is to undertake any consultation whatsoever in respect of budget preparations. That was the gist of the comments, as I recall, made frequently by the former minister of finance. There was a question about the appropriateness of that traditional concept that the hon. member has taken from Britain in these cases in our modern economy.

I have not talked to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) about this. I do not know what the budget will disclose with respect to the matters that have been mentioned by the hon. member. A question that the members of the House of Commons ought to ask themselves is whether, in the operation of a modern economy and the preparation of a budget, it is relevant to apply the rigid categories that were applicable in the days that the hon. member has mentioned.

● (1512)

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I followed with great interest the statement that has just been made by the government House leader with respect to such a practice. He is quite right when he says that the former minister of finance, Mr. Donald MacDonald, P.C., did in fact question at one stage budget secrecy and whether it is appropriate in very general terms, but with respect to a specific interest which I raised with him in the House of Commons at the time, on that occasion he did not—and we do have the tradition on this occasion in the event that something untoward should be revealed—back away from his obligation to assure the House that the existing practice would continue, and practice is, therefore, a very good reason.

No one governs the private sector—businesses, or labour unions. No one ought to be able to speculate in any way whatsoever with respect to what is contained in the budget in the sense of taking advantage of it. This particularly applies in the private sector, and that is the reason for the tradition. We all know that, and it could very well apply in the public sector as well in the event this kind of matter should take place.

I am interested as well in the fact that the government House leader indicated to us today, quite properly, that he has not talked to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien). I assume he will be talking to the minister. The fact that the matter was

Point of Order—Mr. McCain

raised in advance of the budget being presented, as the House leader has said, will not stop a leak. Of course, the only time that a leak could take place is before the budget is presented. However, if it has, it is extremely important that the minister live up to the undertaking that he will consult with the Minister of Finance and that tonight the Minister of Finance stand in his place and indicate to the House what the facts are with respect to the matter raised by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent). It is important that that be done, and we have a right to know. Then the situation can be discussed and decided upon by the House.

The parliamentary secretary to the minister says that it is pure speculation. I agree with him when he says it is speculation, but it is speculation that ought to be laid to rest. That is my point. I am happy that the government House leader is going to be speaking to the Minister of Finance, and I hope that the minister will make the appropriate statement.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) has raised an important question of privilege. It awaits the presentation of the budget this evening, and will be subject to further discussion at this time tomorrow.

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POINT OF ORDER

MR. MCCAIN—TOURISM—FUNDY NATIONAL PARK

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have a document in my hand issued by the government, intended to promote inter-Canadian tourism and, no doubt, to turn the balance of the tourism dollar, which is being spent by Canadians abroad. In the first place, the document is inadequate, but even worse than that, and this is the subject of my point of order, is that it is inaccurate. Referring to Fundy National Park they say:

Live it, Learn it, Love it.

Fundy's in Nova Scotia on the Bay of Fundy where you can see the world's highest tides flood in and out. It is alive with things to see, touch and do.

The definition and description of the park are quite all right, but the location of the park indicates the lack of concern that many publications seem to have for accuracy. I would like to point out to the government, just in case none of its members are aware of it, that that park is definitely located in, and is the pride of, New Brunswick.

It is only fitting that the minister for tourism should reissue the booklet, withdraw those copies which have been circulated, remail those which have been mailed on request, and have the corrections made. The document should not only be withdrawn but should give proper attention to the scenic values of all of Canada. But, for goodness sake, let us put them province by province where they belong.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!