

*Privilege—Mr. Nielsen*

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans).

**Mr. Deans:** Mr. Speaker, I listened—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Chair would like to call the attention of the House to the House order which will mean that at four o'clock we will be dealing with budget matters.

**Mr. Nielsen:** On that point of order, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** The Chair has recognized the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain on a point of order.

● (1550)

**Mr. Nielsen:** It was on the remarks of the Chair, Mr. Speaker, just very briefly.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) is deferring on the matter of the four o'clock House order.

**Mr. Nielsen:** That is right. I just want to say that there would be a question as to whether or not it is a House order. We have no intention of carrying this question on beyond four o'clock because we want to hear the Budget. But the matter is far too important not to carry on tomorrow at three o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Chair in no way wishes to interfere with the rights of Hon. Members to make further representations. There is ample precedent, the case of the Hon. Member for Peace River (Mr. Cooper) being the most recent one.

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the exchanges that took place in Question Period, as well as to the presentation by the House Leader for the Official Opposition and the response of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard). I, too, read this morning's paper. I read the story a number of times, quite carefully, and there is no doubt in my mind that the story raised more questions than it answered, which was perhaps unfortunate. You may have noted that the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) raised some questions which that story failed to answer. I listened to the House Leader for the Official Opposition with great care and I must say his presentation was long and, honestly, quite difficult to follow in some instances. It was very involved and it raised a number of questions which may well have been related to the ultimate question of privilege claimed, but they were questions which, I think it is fair to say, we dealt with during the course of the last two or three weeks.

For example, Mr. Speaker, there was the incident of the letter referred to by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) which ultimately turned out not to exist. We supported the Official Opposition's contention that that letter ought to have been tabled, and we were appalled to find the letter and the Minister's comments concerning what was alleged to have been said by the present Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) were unsupported.

The House Leader of the Official Opposition raised another matter of great concern. He indicated that there were incidents where Members of Parliament were being threatened over statements they may have made regarding matters which are clearly a public concern. They were being threatened with exposure of information of a personal nature in an effort to intimidate them into stopping their legitimate public criticism. I should like to go into that matter in a little more detail later. He then went on to speak of the matter of the Special Recovery Fund, which has been the topic of some considerable debate in the House over the course of the last few days, and the whole question of the Liberal Government's use of public funds for what, at least on the surface, has been indicated to have been patronage purposes.

Other than the fact that they are of interest and tend to cast the Government in a bad light, quite justifiably so, I am not too sure how those matters relate to the question now before us, which is as follows. There are two related matters, but they are separate. Did the Government improperly use public funds to research and obtain information of a private nature about Members of Parliament? That question has to be addressed in some detail in order to determine facts. Did the Government, using funds available to it for the exercise of its public responsibility, allocate those funds so as to seek information, private or public, which could be used to discredit or undermine the effectiveness of a Member of Parliament or, as raised by my Leader, of Members of Parliament. I think that is a separate question to be dealt with in a moment.

The second question is: If they used those public funds to get that information, was that information to be used or intended to be used to intimidate a Member of Parliament? I think the House Leader for the Opposition used those exact words. In addition to that, was it to be used to deny the Member, or attempt to deny the Member, the undoubted right of freedom of speech?

I think those are difficult questions to answer, Mr. Speaker. The story as it appears in the paper today, although it carries considerable innuendo, produces very little evidence to show that that is the case. However, having said that, it is not unreasonable to draw the conclusion that that may well have been the case. I think it would have been easier for us to come to a conclusion about that had the House Leader for the Official Opposition dealt specifically with that matter rather than with the other matters.

As I see it, the question you have to deal with is twofold, Mr. Speaker. The first question is the one I raised: Can the Government, using all the powers of the Treasury—

**Mr. Nielsen:** State.

**Mr. Deans:** —using all the powers of the state, as my colleague says, but using all the financial powers of the Treasury, can the Government go out and investigate at whatever cost, in whatever way it desires, the private involvement of Members of Parliament, whether it be in business or otherwise? Is that a breach of privilege? It is quite clear on the face of it that the Office of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)