

Speaker's Ruling

Our constituents want to find out immediately what this bill involves. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, you can assure members that this is not some item that might be put off indefinitely or for a few days even.

The Speaker: To the extent that I can give that assurance to all hon. members, I will surely give it. This would be a point that would be put on the agenda. I do not know whether I can talk to the Board of Internal Economy. I will defer to that and go back to the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell for an answer to that question.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I guess I am really responding as the spokesperson for the Board of Internal Economy. I can assure my hon. colleague that he has my undertaking to bring it to the attention of the board as early as the meeting on Tuesday.

The Speaker: With agreement from hon. members we will proceed this way. If there is not agreement at the end of it all I will take this up again and I will get back to the House.

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POINTS OF ORDER**PROPS IN THE CHAMBER**

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during question period the hon. member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke rose and put a question.

• (1510)

I am informed, although I did not see it as I could not see it from my seat, that on the television cameras it was quite obvious that he was holding a prop. The prop was in the nature of a sign posted on the back of the document or portfolio that he was holding. The document was clearly visible on television and contained a slogan that related to recent meetings on taxes in Canada.

The person who told me this saw it on television in the lobby. I was not in the lobby, I was in the House and could not see it from where I was sitting.

I refer to Beauchesne's sixth edition, citation 501:

Speakers have consistently ruled that it is improper to produce exhibits of any sort in the Chamber. Thus during the flag debate of 1964, the display of competing designs was prohibited. At other times boxes of cereal, detergent and milk powder have been ruled out of order.

Citation 502 states:

When a member produced samples of grain in the House, the Speaker deprecated the practice, saying, 'If we allowed hon. members to produce such exhibits, we would get ourselves involved in a position where perhaps all too often hon. members would want to table dead fish, herrings, or red herrings, damp grain or wild oats'.

This quotation from previous Speakers indicates the grave nature of this offence against the rules of the House and I ask the Chair to apply the proper discipline to the hon. member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke.

The Speaker: Perhaps there is a simple explanation. The hon. member is here now and perhaps he can explain it in a few words.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that a prop is something that relates to the subject at hand. I held up my speech and I used a piece of stiff cardboard in order to keep the pages from falling over, as they will.

I will not display it now and further incur the wrath of the hon. member, but as it happens there was a label on the back, which we have on briefcases and everything else, which said "No more taxes. No more debt".

I can understand the hon. member's sensitivity to that. It was not my intention—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I am glad we do not have the lash in our arsenal.

I would encourage all hon. members not to use props. The hon. member has explained that it was done inadvertently. I accept the hon. member's word.

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PRIVILEGE**COMMENTS IN QUESTION PERIOD—SPEAKER'S RULING**

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on a question of privilege by the hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, which he raised first on November 2, 1994 and then again on February 8, 1995.

On November 2 the member rose to complain that during question period the previous day the Deputy Prime Minister had breached confidentiality by quoting from a letter which the member had written on behalf of a constituent to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. He contended that by revealing the contents of this letter without his permission the Deputy Prime Minister had interfered with his ability to carry out his duties. He argued that his constituents would now wonder whether or not matters on which they sought his assistance could be kept confidential.

The Deputy Prime Minister responded that the letter was part of the public record of the Canadian Radio—Television and Telecommunications Commission.

On February 8, 1995 the hon. member again rose on a question of privilege to state that new information had come to light on the same matter. He explained that the constituent on whose behalf he had written had received a letter from the manager of correspondence and complaints at the CRTC. In that letter the