

Privilege—Mr. Broadbent

and they think anti-dumping duties should be applied; the consumers are in British Columbia and they think they should not be applied.

● (1502)

If I were to ask the provinces to get together, it would be rather to have Premier Davis and Premier Bennett get together to find an agreement, certainly not Alberta and British Columbia.

Mr. Huntington: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the right hon. gentleman whether he realizes that his reply today will be a great surprise to interests in British Columbia who have been negotiating with the province of Alberta on the clear understanding of a commitment from the Prime Minister.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. ROBERTS—DENIAL OF NEWSPAPER REPORT ALLEGING MISUSE OF POSTAL FRANK

Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. The *Toronto Globe and Mail* carries a story alleging that I have abused my franking privilege by sending newsletters of mine to areas outside my constituency, with the frank. This allegation is entirely false. I have sent newsletters outside my riding but I have paid for the printing and the postage of those sendings myself. I think it is important, since this is a matter which does affect the privileges of the House, that my position on the matter ought to be clearly put forward.

MR. BROADBENT—ALLEGED LEAK OF BUDGET DETAILS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I too rise on a question of privilege, and I consider the subject matter to be of serious importance. I want to deal with two parts of the issue involved in this question of privilege. The first will be to indicate briefly the seriousness involved in a budget leak of any kind, and the second is to present my reasons for believing there is very good cause for concluding that precise information concerning tonight's budget has, indeed, been leaked in advance.

I checked the record for the past 50 years concerning budget leaks, and found there were two cases, both of which led to the resignation of ministers of the Crown, and they both took place in Great Britain.

One case occurred in 1947 and involved an indiscretion by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time. He made an off-hand comment to a journalist on the very evening of the presentation of his budget, obviously with no intent to have such information appear in public before he had concluded his budget address. However, what did transpire was that because of the timing of a certain edition of the paper for which the journalist worked, news in particular detail about the budget did in fact reach the paper. As soon as the Chancellor of the

[Mr. Trudeau.]

Exchequer at the time, Dr. Dalton, was made aware of this, he submitted his resignation forthwith, which was accepted on the following day.

The other case I discovered in modern times, and that means going back probably over a 50-year period, took place in 1936, also in Great Britain. In this case it was not the Chancellor of the Exchequer who resigned but another minister of the Crown. In this particular instance there was what transpired to be a leak of information that led to certain activity on the stock market. As soon as the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time learned of grounds for believing that there was at least a clear possibility of a leak of budgetary information, he initiated an investigation. The investigation led to the disclosure that another minister of the Crown had in fact revealed budgetary information, and in that case that minister resigned.

In the present circumstances I submit at this point for consideration a story which appeared in Saturday's *Toronto Star*. I should say at the outset that there have been countless newspaper, radio, and television speculative pieces about what may or may not appear in the budget. We always take that for granted. There is a crucial distinction to be made in respect of what one normally finds in such stories, whether in newspapers, on television or on radio, that is, the stories contain therein words like "it is speculated" that such and such will appear in the budget, or "it is assumed" that such and such will appear in the budget, or "it is rumoured" that such and such will appear in the budget.

In Saturday's *Toronto Star* one finds no wording of that kind at all in the story as it is worded. The story begins with the assertions I indicated in my letter to you earlier today, Mr. Speaker, and as I presented to day in a question to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). It begins in the April 8 edition of the *Star* "The federal government will offer the provinces" such and such, and the rest of the story concerns details of precise dollar amounts, taxation changes, and sales tax changes that are going to vary from province to province, with the direct dollar implications being connected to those tax changes.

The point I want to make then is really twofold in nature. A budget leak is a very serious matter indeed, in a parliamentary government, and at least at this point no one knows, except someone who may have leaked the story, whether it was a leak. Until we see the budget tonight most people in Canada, and certainly most people in the House of Commons, will not know if the story that appeared in the *Toronto Star* is in fact based on a budgetary leak. However, there are good grounds for believing so, and that is why I am raising the matter at this point. I do so simply to give you notice that there are very good grounds for believing, given the specificity of the story, that it is not speculative but contains what the budget is going to contain, in concrete detail. That is why I am concerned.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, really what I would like to do at this point is simply serve Your Honour with notice that if the budget tonight, when it appears, contains the kind of precise detail that is indicated in the *Toronto Star* story, I intend