

Privilege—Mr. Boudria

Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals think this is a non-Budget, let them go buy a pack of cigarettes this afternoon! They will find out there is one! And those who like scotch need only go for a drink or buy a bottle, they will see for themselves that there is a Budget.

Mr. Speaker, I would think that you will be taking the matter under very serious consideration before making a rulling in accordance with the principles of British parliamentary tradition. The question boils down to deciding whether or not the Members of this House will have to abide by standards which do not take into account the rules of natural justice.

Our friends on the other side simply ignore the rules of natural justice which have always been the hallmark of parliamentary tradition and their British peers. In the name of democracy, Mr. Speaker, they are asking for the resignation of the best Minister of Finance Canada has ever had. They keep repeating the great democratic principles but, like I said before, these are the same Liberals who do not hesitate to call upon non-elected people to thwart the will of Parliament.

The Liberals are advocating double standards for this House, but I am aware of the wisdom of the Chair and I am sure that you will not give currency to these ridiculous claims made by the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, Canada is facing a promising future. Canada should look to the future with confidence and I would urge you to ask my colleagues in this House to put an immediate end to this debate just so we may do what we were elected for and sent here to do, which is to govern and to make decisions in the best interests of the country.

• (1550)

[*English*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, the issue before Parliament today is indeed very serious. I have given prior notification of my intention to rise today on this question of privilege. As a matter of fact, I drove from my residence last night to Parliament Hill in order personally to serve that notice on the Clerk of the House of Commons.

Some Members may not think that driving 50 miles at midnight is important, but I felt the issue was of such importance that it warranted that action. Perhaps Mem-

bers opposite do not think that not only parliamentary privilege of the House but the more important privileges given to us by our constituents to serve them in Parliament are as important as some of us believe. However, I believe those issues are fundamental to this country being the great democracy it is. I hope that at least some Members opposite would share that view.

If you determine, Mr. Speaker, that I have a prima facie case of privilege, I am prepared to move the appropriate motion to refer this issue to the parliamentary committee. Of course, that statement is indeed necessary in order to proceed with this item further, if Your Honour finds there is a prima facie case of privilege.

There are three issues at stake. The first is that the privilege of this House has been abused and, more important, the privileges of all parliamentarians have been abused, and even more fundamental, the privileges of the constituents who send us here have been abused. The second is that secrecy has been breached. The third is that a commitment made to the House by the Government has been breached.

Perhaps I can start with the last item and describe that to Your Honour. You will know that it is recorded the *Votes and Proceedings* on Wednesday, April 19, 1989:

By unanimous consent, it was ordered,—That notwithstanding any Standing or Special Order of this House, at 5.00 o'clock p.m. on Thursday, April 27, 1989, the Speaker shall interrupt any proceedings then before the House and proceed forthwith to the consideration of Ways and Means Proceedings No. 1, for the purpose of hearing the Budget statement of the Minister of Finance;

Of course, that was provided for by unanimous consent because the Speaker rose in his seat and asked for the unanimous consent of all Members for the Minister of Finance to proceed at the time indicated in the motion I just read to deal with the issue of the Ways and Means motion, namely, the reading of the Budget in the House.

We gave the Minister of Finance our consent for him to read the Budget in the House. Implicit in that consent is obviously the fact that the Budget would be read in the House and that Members of the House would learn of the existence of its contents before or at least the same time as anyone else in the country. That has been breached twice. First, it was breached by the neglect or whatever caused the leak in question.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Theft.