

talked about views having to reflect Parliament widely or approval in principle of Parliament. He went on to say that he had no hesitation in spending money to tell the Canadian people about a matter that is before Parliament. He has refused to give us an undertaking in keeping with what he said last night on television, that he would not permit any further public money to be spent on government advertising campaigns until this measure has been disposed of by the House. He refused categorically today to give us that assurance. If I needed any further arguments to support my question of privilege, I would merely have to refer to the *Hansard* of today and the replies of the hon. Minister of State for Multiculturalism.

Therefore, if Madam Speaker agrees in her wisdom that I have a prima facie question of privilege, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker):

That the matter of the financing of public advertising campaigns at taxpayers' expense on behalf of a partisan policy or opinion, before such policy or opinion has been approved by the House of Commons, be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

• (1510)

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Madam Speaker, I rise on behalf of all my colleagues to lend our complete support to the question of privilege that has just been raised in the House of Commons.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Broadbent:** I think it is incontestably the case, or ought to be the case, if the rules of this House were properly enforced in the best traditions of this House, that money spent for advertising should be specifically linked with programs that Parliament as a whole has approved, not ones that are under debate or discussion. In supporting this question of privilege I want to underline the connection that exists between the advertising that could be used and, in our view, has been used from time to time by the present government for partisan purposes and the related question of polling. Everyone knows that before you spend thousands, indeed millions of dollars, on advertising, you do the polling first. We heard earlier in the day, in answers from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), not an apology for keeping for government purposes information that was to be used by them until, in the words of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) spoken in Toronto yesterday, it was no longer of use, presumably to the government of the day. I can see no other meaning to that.

We have a government which has been preaching the importance of freedom of information and has drafted a farce of a bill, which is full of loopholes, and the Prime Minister today said they are going to keep information on federal-provincial relations away from members on this side of the House. I think that information should be available. I do not want my argument misunderstood. I do not think anyone on either side of the House would deny the legitimacy of polling. There is absolutely nothing wrong with polling, as such, to obtain

information. The question is: should that information be made available to the people who pay for it? The answer from this side of the House is, yes, it should be.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Broadbent:** A question of considerable importance is at stake here. On the one hand, the government is polling, and no one objects to that—the Prime Minister tried in his usual way to confuse the issue today—and on the other the real issue is withholding information obtained in the polling and then, specifically related to the question of privilege which was raised today, putting ads in the papers, on television and on radio networks right across Canada, that have as their prime purpose the partisan interests of the Liberal government of the day, to further their particular views on a controversial issue. Surely, Madam Speaker, that is wrong.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West):** Madam Speaker, I want to make a brief intervention in support of my colleague on his eloquent, articulate, and well-motivated question of privilege as a member of Parliament. I address myself particularly to the members on the government side of the House because I think each of us as members of Parliament must consider the function of raising questions of privilege before the Speaker and the purpose for which we do that.

The purpose of questions of privilege is to raise matters which arise where the individual member of Parliament is somehow interfered with in the performance of his functions and duties as a member. I can think of nothing in this particular instance that has been raised in this House over the course of this Parliament which has been of the same consequence, because of the enormity of the expenditure that is taking place as a result of the government involvement in a multi-million dollar advertising campaign, which I submit is contrary to every fundamental principle upon which Parliament has been developed and fought for over the years.

The normal tradition in our country has been that the issues have been decided upon in free and unfettered debate in the House of Commons, on the floor of this House, as reported by an independent press, as viewed in an unrestricted way by the people of this country. We now have an additional dimension to our situation in Parliament—we have television. For the government spokesman, the Minister of State for Multiculturalism (Mr. Fleming), to stand up and say that the point of view of the government has not been adequately expressed and he must recommend to his colleagues that they devote enormous sums of money to an advertising campaign is ludicrous in the extreme. We are now being broadcast live across this country, in every corner, with the exception of remote northern areas.

If this were the only instance—the one we are talking about now with respect to the whole question of advertising on the constitution—well, that would be fine. The minister may give his excuse, but there has been a pattern developing with respect to government advertising since the minister has taken