

Winnipeg North. I suggest that what we have in the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act is analagous to the requirements in the income tax legislation making documents filed under that legislation completely confidential even though the contents of those documents might be of interest to individual members of parliament or parliament as a whole.

What the hon. member for Winnipeg North seems to be attempting to say in his motion is that the mere fact that through some inadvertence, or perhaps even by some design, a reporter for a Toronto newspaper was able to see these documents, then the clear provisions of a law passed by this parliament can be disregarded merely by passing a resolution in this house. If this principle is correct, then the following situation could happen: If someone left an income tax return lying on a desk in plain sight in some district taxation office and a member of the public happened to take a look at it and, not knowing the requirements of the law or perhaps knowing the requirements and ignoring them, referred to the contents publicly in the press or on radio or television, then it would be possible, according to the hon. member for Winnipeg North, to have the entire return produced in this house simply by the passage of a resolution.

I think there are many precedents in the *Journals* of this house which make it clear it is not proper, at the request of a member or at the request of the house itself, for the government to produce confidential information or information deemed to be confidential under the income tax law. I suggest that the situation is no different here. If this were not the case, as I have said, a very difficult and trouble-fraught situation could arise very easily. It would be possible, as I have attempted to suggest, to have confidential income tax information produced through the simple expedient of leaving an income tax return lying on a desk so that through inadvertence or design some member of the public could take a look at it.

Then a person could drop a few hints to the press, the information would be published and it would be perfectly proper, according to the principle which the hon. member for Winnipeg North is attempting to suggest, to have the entire income tax return brought before this house. Surely no one would agree this is the correct procedure. Surely no one would agree that we should adopt a principle, by means of the passage of this motion,

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which would lend credence to a very dangerous argument. There would be no point in this parliament passing a law which said certain information shall be confidential if that law could be swept away by the simple passage of a resolution of this house rather than through formal amendment of the legislation just because some member of the public happened to get a glance at some confidential document. I find this argument difficult to accept.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North is not here but if he were in the house I should like to ask him this question. If someone through inadvertence happened to get a glance at his income tax return and published the details in a Toronto or Winnipeg newspaper, would he say it would be proper for me as a member of this house to move a motion requesting that his entire return be made public? The hon. member for Winnipeg North is reported on page 1029 of *Hansard* for February 10 to have said:

I do not ask for any special rights for myself or any other member of parliament but surely members of parliament are entitled to the same rights and privileges as are given to anybody else.

• (6:50 p.m.)

Would he apply that same argument if someone saw his income tax return through inadvertence? I doubt it very much. Therefore I suggest that on grounds of logic, law and common sense what he has attempted to argue in his remarks is equally lacking in validity when applied to the documents in which he is interested in having filed in this house through this notice of motion.

It may well be that a member of the public should not have more rights than a member of parliament has or that a member of parliament in many circumstances should not have more rights than a member of the public, but where parliament through a formal expression in the passage of a law has said that certain documents are confidential unless certain things happen, then even though a member of the public through some inadvertence or similar reason gets a look at a document of a certain sort that certainly does not create a whole set of rights on the part of this parliament to disregard the legislation in question and have the entire document produced.

It could well be that if the Norris Commission were still in existence Mr. Justice Norris as the commissioner could direct the production of these documents. I think this is implied in the words of the statute. This does not give very much support to the argument