

White Paper will cause problems of which we can be aware as soon as possible after the presentation of the White Paper.

That is the substance of my presentation, Mr. Speaker. However, I do want to underscore one point very clearly. This is a White Paper of proposals on tax reform. It is not a Budget. That is the fundamental difference which is at the heart of what we are talking about.

In addition, it is very important that we be careful, in order to maintain the validity of the consultation process, not to use the opportunity to make political points which will undermine the integrity of this consultation process thus setting ourselves back a number of years and reverting to the bad old ways of making Budgets in a vacuum, which leads to the problems about which the Party opposite has a good deal of knowledge.

Mr. Speaker: I will recognize the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) to make a short point.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a small point to the comments. It is important that we put on the record very clearly that no one is suggesting that the Minister of Finance ought not consult with people from all walks of life in developing a package for tax reform. We are suggesting, however, that to consult with those people virtually hours before making the tax reform public, after all the t's have been crossed and the i's have been dotted, is simply to give a preview and advance notice of what is in the documentation.

The Minister of Finance has not responded to my request for a list of the participants. There is a quarter-page ad in the newspapers today which says:

On June 18, he'll—

—that is the Minister of Finance—

—present his white paper on tax reform. On June 19, we'll explain it in black and white.

They will move very quickly. That is an ad by Wood Gundy.

Another firm, Financial Concept Group Inc., is going to hold a seminar to explain the new tax reform proposals, the impact on investments and retirement planning, and what is next, starting at seven o'clock tomorrow night. In other words, at a seminar which will begin an hour before the Minister of Finance stands in this House to deliver his proposals, advisers from Financial Concept Group Inc., Mr. Don Bridgman and Mr. Brian Costello, will be commenting on the new tax changes.

I think it is important that the list of the 20 experts be made public. If that list includes Don Bridgman or other people from Financial Concept Group Inc., it means that they are prepared to start talking about this privileged information before the Minister of Finance even stands in the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) has alluded to a matter which, understandably, is giving me some concern. Perhaps the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) can clarify this.

Privilege—Mr. J. Turner

As I understand it, the oath which this group of advisers has taken would forbid them from releasing any information which they have acquired in the course of their advisory work for the Government of Canada and the Department of Finance until after the Minister of Finance rises in this House at eight o'clock tomorrow night.

I want to know whether I understand completely the effect of that oath. Perhaps the Minister of Finance can give some confirmation of that.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the oath these people have taken is the same oath as members of the Public Service take. They are sworn, therefore, not to release any of this information and not to take advantage of this information in any way prior to the time that I stand in my place and announce it in the course of my presentation tomorrow.

As a point of clarification, Mr. Speaker, these are lawyers and tax accountants. One of the firms mentioned by the House Leader of the New Democratic Party is an investment dealer. I believe the other is an investment advisory firm. This type of firm has not been involved in this process, only lawyers and accountants have been involved.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, I think the question at issue here is far more serious than many Members of this House would care to believe, especially those on the Government benches.

I had the privilege of working on tax matters for seven consecutive years. I have brought down seven budgets in a legislature, and I am aware of what has to be done to surround ministerial decisions with the greatest possible confidentiality to prevent certain groups and individuals from taking undue advantage of Government decisions.

Mr. Speaker, what is at stake here is Members' privileges, my privileges and the privileges of all Members of this House. I listened carefully to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) and to the explanations he gave, and I think he does not understand what is at stake here. No one is saying that a Minister of Finance cannot consult with any number of experts and various groups, including chambers of commerce, social partners, tax experts, people in the financial sector and others in the social sector. No one is denying that the Minister of Finance is free to hold such consultations. The reason why the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Turner) rose on a question of privilege is, that after the Minister and the Government made their decision, an elite group of about twenty people met here in Ottawa today to be told, before the Members of this House and before the rest of the Canadian public, about the contents of the tax reform proposal that will be tabled tomorrow at 8 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister says it is happening behind closed doors. I have a very simple question for him: Will these people who are given preferential treatment today remain sworn in