

something he allegedly had done. He was alleged to have been privy to budget information and to have conveyed that information to businessmen.

Much was made of the amendment which was brought in by the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) and of the fact that it and the motion had been voted on by the government as well as by the opposition. I suggest hon. members read that case very thoroughly. If they do, they will see that the amendment was brought to clarify the motion. It was somewhat of a rewriting of the motion and was designed to describe more fully the nature of the accusation which might have been studied by the committee if it had been referred to the committee. That was the purpose of the amendment.

What this particular precedent says to us is not that breaching budgetary secrecy is a question of privilege but that the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River had a question of privilege because he had been accused by a newspaper of breaching budgetary secrecy and doing something dishonourable in the exercise of his function. That is the important point which has to be considered in this case.

I must repeat that the protection of privilege has to do with the protection of the capacity of hon. members to function as members in this House. If we are dealing with the wrongdoings, conduct or behaviour of a minister or the methods used by a minister of which some hon. members do not approve, that does not constitute a question of privilege, although it might be of great importance to the hon. members concerned. It is difficult for me to deal with such matters as questions of privilege.

I think that is a summing up of the arguments, and I must conclude that I cannot find a *prima facie* case of privilege. If hon. members want to deal with the matter in another way, there are avenues open to them, and I invite them to follow those avenues, if they feel that they can substantiate whatever allegations they wish to advance.

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of clarification. During the course of the debate yesterday and in remarks Your Honour has addressed, particularly in dealing with the laying of a charge, there has been bandied about, not only this time but on numerous occasions in the past, what I think is a pure canard, and that is that he who lays the charge puts his seat in jeopardy. When the charge is laid before a partisan committee, that is total and utter nonsense. That has crept in, perhaps, because of bravado by way of a challenge. There is no substance whatsoever with regard to such a procedure in this House.

● (1610)

**Madam Speaker:** That has to do with members themselves. I do not find anything contained in the Standing Orders that would allow me to rule that if someone made a formal charge of this nature to the House, and if it is found that the charge is unfounded, then that member would have to resign. Yesterday I did rule that this was a matter of personal ethics. If one feels his credibility has been destroyed by an incident in the House,

then he is free to take whatever action he feels justified in taking in the circumstances.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Madam Speaker, I rise to clarify a point. The Chair probably used the words in the ruling because of the failure to appreciate the refinements of my argument. At no time did I say in my submission to the Chair that there need not be specific allegations; indeed, I did say the contrary. I pointed out three specifics in arguing my case that were inherent, in my submission, in the motion. At no time did I specifically say that the allegations were not necessary. I agree with the Chair on that point. I have to agree with Your Honour anyway because you made the ruling.

What I did say, and what was referred to by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) is that there is no requirement for a member to put his seat on the line if he makes specific allegations. Perhaps that was lost in the beauty of my argument.

**Madam Speaker:** The hon. member's point is well taken.

MR. SPEYER—ALLEGED MISLEADING ANSWER GIVEN BY MINISTER

**Mr. Chris Speyer (Cambridge):** I have a short but important question of privilege. I am pleased that the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) is present in the House because my question of privilege relates to a misleading statement made by the minister during question period. I hope it was inadvertent. I shall deal with the matter very briefly.

I asked a supplementary question of the Minister of Finance. The substance of the question was that the federal government over a three-year period would raise \$2 billion as a result of the limitation of the capital cost allowance system. As I understood the answer by the Minister of Finance—and I am pleased to see that the minister is present in the House—he said that not one dime will flow to the government.

In the budget that was tabled in this House last Thursday evening, November 12, and the statement which is contained on page 4 of the budget—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Will the hon. member please resume his seat? If the hon. member has a question of privilege, he must talk about the privilege and not continue to discuss the matter which was raised during the course of question period. I believe the hon. member is about to debate the question. The fact that the answer is not satisfactory to the hon. member does not constitute a question of privilege, I must remind him. If the hon. member has a different matter to raise, I will hear him with regard to that.

**Mr. Speyer:** My question of privilege relates to the misleading answer that was given by the Minister of Finance on the budget papers.

The Chair must give me the opportunity, I say to you, Madam Speaker respectfully, to point out exactly the accuracy of my assertions, and I would be delighted—