

necessary to hear arguments on the other side of the question, I would appreciate an opportunity to give them.

**Mr. Speaker:** If I feel it necessary to call on counsel, I will make the appropriate arrangements. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Always, Mr. Speaker, without prejudice to establishing a precedent here, but if it is the minister's intention to establish that kind of a precedent, then I would certainly like to have that in our rules, but the Speaker has to decide that more than us, so I leave it to the Speaker to decide.

**Mr. Speaker:** So hon. members and the public understand, there could be a little bit of a difficulty here. When a notice of privilege is given to the Speaker, it is incumbent upon the Speaker to treat that notice of privilege with absolute confidence. In other words, the Speaker cannot tell other members that there is a motion coming on a question of privilege.

The reason for the confidentiality is that until a member rises on a question of privilege or indicates to the Speaker that he or she is going to rise, the member has the right to stay quiet in his or her seat and at that point the application dies.

The hon. House leader for the government does not have notice, and has heard nothing about this until I rose a few minutes ago. He may not be able to stay here for the full argument, but he wants the opportunity to come back, if necessary, and address the Chair. I do not treat that as a precedent. I treat it as the discretion of the Chair in handling an argument.

On the other hand, the Chair is always in the hands of hon. members. If it suited hon. members to put off the argument of this application to a time when all members on both sides of the issue could be in the Chamber, that is easily arranged and I would be quite prepared to do so. The hon. member for Kamloops.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I know that we are anxious to get on with dealing with the health of animals and the plant protection act. Knowing that some people have other commitments, I wonder if there would be unanimous consent to revisit this at three o'clock when there will be an opportunity to have all parties here and able to make representations, if they wish.

### *Privilege*

**Mr. Speaker:** I am in the hands of members. It might suit the government side to do that. The hon. member for Dartmouth.

**Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to proceed with this matter this morning. I rise today on a point of privilege to bring to the attention of members and Your Honour the issue of untrue and misleading advertising by the Department of Finance which is being broadcast on radio stations from coast to coast.

According to Standing Order 48(2), I bring this matter to the attention of the Speaker in the House at the earliest possible opportunity. I offer transcripts of the ads for the table and the Clerk, and they may, if they choose, read the text of these into the record.

This is not the first time that this issue was before this House, Mr. Speaker. You will recall the representations made by the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra on September 25, 1989, concerning the placement of advertisements in newspapers. On October 10, you delivered a very important and historic ruling. I would like to quote from a section of your ruling found in *Hansard*, of October 10 at page 4461.

However, I want the House to understand very clearly that if your Speaker ever has to consider a situation like this again, the Chair will not be as generous. This is a case, which, in my opinion, should never recur. I expect the Department of Finance and other departments to study this ruling carefully and remind everyone within the Public Service that we are a parliamentary democracy, not a so-called executive democracy, nor a so-called administrative democracy.

• (1130)

The misleading ads have returned, and the sequel as I will argue is worse than the first series. First, we are dealing with a different medium. As we all know, an ad in the newspaper is a matter of the written word which can be read and reread at the discretion of the individual reader. For instance, a reader can seek—

**Mr. Speaker:** I think I have the general gist of the hon. member's complaint, and I thank him for giving me a copy of the radio advertisement. In assisting me, I would ask him to direct his argument to where there has been a breach of privilege.

It may have been by way of radio, television or signboard. That may be of some interest if it turns on the question of privilege, which has been breached as the hon. member argues.