

Alleged Leak re New Airport Site

appraise land. On this ground, that sort of leak and that kind of action by the government is wrong. This in itself constitutes a prima facie case.

It is wrong to make a statement concerning the budget and government decisions which affect increases and decreases in taxes. I submit, with the greatest respect, that it is just as wrong to hire a group of people in the advertising companies, to hire technicians from television and radio stations and then to make a statement which is disseminated in this way across the nation at the expense of the taxpayers, so that some people may enrich themselves. It is wrong for cabinet ministers and Privy Councillors to do this. It is contrary to their oath to make a disclosure on a matter dealing with money and property.

The results of these wrongs is not what we are considering here. We are considering the wrong itself, and that is the point of privilege. The motion, if it is accepted, will give us the facts and will determine whether this breach of political ethics amounted to a violation of the Privy Councillors' oath. We are entitled on this kind of motion to determine whether such a breach occurred. We can only find this out by conducting an examination in committee to find out all the facts in that regard.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if the hon. member does not feel that the fact he has had two runs at convincing the Chair that he has a prima facie case is sufficient and that he should now reach his conclusion.

Mr. Woolliams: I can finish up very quickly, Mr. Speaker. I report, sir, with the greatest respect to you, that if the ministers had a right to make such a statement in the house, surely I have the right to answer it. It is not easy to make a case when one has to limit oneself to procedure. Why did the ministers not limit themselves to an argument on procedure? They came here to exonerate their consciences.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if the hon. member could make his argument.

Mr. Woolliams: With your permission, sir, I will proceed with my argument.

An hon. Member: You should have taped this in advance.

Mr. Woolliams: That was the leader of the Liberal party in British Columbia about whom the Prime Minister asked "Who the hell is he?"—and he still does not know.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if this procedural discussion might not be kept on a higher plane.

Mr. Woolliams: I was only repeating some of the adjectives used by the Prime Minister.

If speculation had taken place as a result of the leak, I submit it would have cost the Crown thousands of dollars in litigation and court costs. Land owners with money can afford the luxury of litigation so as to enrich themselves at the expense of the state. This is the reason behind the rule of impropriety.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to read a quotation into the record, but since you have asked me to limit my remarks I will not read it. I will only say that it is to be found in a book called "The British Cabinet System", 1830-1938 by A. B. Keith in which the author points out the reason for the rule of secrecy. Any decision made at the cabinet level that affects taxpayers must be kept secret, and the same is true of the budget. There is no exception to that rule. The exception which my two friends are trying to make is that they wanted to pre-tape the announcement so as to appear on television to show what they are doing in a particular area of the country. This is no excuse and it is no defence.

There are facts to show that the booking to make the tapes was done on March 15 and was postponed several times until the recordings were made on March 22 and 23. If the 14 minute tape in English and the 10 minute tape in French were made, as seems to be admitted by one of the ministers, then the dubbing of the tape must have been done, which meant making more cuts for the various media. The taping and the dubbing must have required about a hundred people, who would all have been in the know.

A matter of such national importance and potential is bound to give rise to many speculative stories, and I am not being critical in that regard. But I submit that this parliament is entitled to know the facts, and they are not going to get the facts from the nicely worded and planned little statement of the minister.

This will certainly mean that some rules have to be spelled out because this government appears to prefer the public relations method, the advertisers, the pre-taping and the use of all propaganda art possible. If this method is allowed to flourish, then we might as well forget about the swearing in of ministers of the Crown because the oath of office will become a farce.