

what particular interpretation should be given to a particular section. I can only say that to this moment it has been impossible to get all nine premiers who signed the accord, on the same wavelength, and to agree to the same text.

**Mr. Blackburn:** You do not have to worry about Sterling Lyon any more.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Since we told the provinces that we would be tabling the resolution in its final form today, as a direct answer to the hon. lady's question I must say that there is more than one province which disagrees with the complete restoration of the section as it was. Therefore, in the spirit of the accord, I think we will have to go with a modified version of the text that we had originally proposed, not only in the resolution which has been before the House for a year, but also in the drafting sessions. I do not think it is appropriate to point out any particular province. There has been a great deal of negotiations going on, but obviously there is some lack of unanimity among the provinces as to what was intended in the accord.

\* \* \*

### PETITION

#### TABLING OF REPORT OF CLERK OF PETITIONS

**Madam Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the Table the Report of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petitions presented by the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Corbett) and finds that they meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

\* \* \*

### PRIVILEGE

#### MR. McGRATH—ALLEGED BREACH BY MINISTER OF BUDGET SECRECY

**Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Madam Speaker, my question of privilege concerns questions raised in the House today and yesterday directed toward the minister responsible for housing, notice of which was given to Your Honour in accordance with the provisions of the Standing Orders.

Sir Erskine May, in his current edition, in Chapter XXX, referred to the importance of budget secrecy. It is a well-known convention, although I would say that it has more than the force of a convention, that budget secrecy is absolutely essential if the government is to enjoy the confidence of the House. It goes beyond that because if we are to subscribe to the convention of budget secrecy, and if others outside the House, outside cabinet, are to be given information before that information is given to the House, then I submit that it is a violation of my privilege as a Member of Parliament. That

### Privilege—Mr. McGrath

argument has been made before and it has been entertained by the Chair.

As reported on page 12837 of yesterday's *Hansard*, Madam Speaker said:

What is at issue is the matter of secrecy of the budget, which is not to be dealt with under privilege.

I submit with respect that it is a matter of privilege; it is a matter of my privilege. If the budget is released to others outside the House before it is delivered to the House, my privileges as a member of the House have been violated. That is the whole pith and substance of my argument, but it goes beyond that because Madam Speaker said that I have to lay a charge. I do not have to lay a charge. All I have to do is to present to you evidence which in your opinion would constitute a prima facie case. Madam Speaker has to rule whether or not that evidence constitutes a prima facie case of privilege. It is then up to the House or a committee of the House to rule on the matter of substance itself.

I referred to the matter involving the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid). I think that is very important and very germane to my case because at that time the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent), the Leader of the New Democratic Party, was successful in placing before the House an amendment which was in fact accepted by the Chair, by your distinguished predecessor. The hon. member was not asked to lay a charge; he was not asked to stake his seat on it. He merely presented an amendment that contained very serious allegations, which is precisely what I am trying to do. I think the House should be aware of what that amendment said. It read:

—and that the said member had advance knowledge from official sources of amendments to be proposed to a bill emanating from the said budget and conveyed that knowledge to businessmen.

At that time the Speaker did not immediately ask the hon. member to stake his seat on that charge, because that was a charge. Mr. Speaker merely accepted that motion as an amendment to the motion before the House. It was put to the House and it was agreed to. It so happens that subsequently the committee found that the hon. member was not in fact guilty of betraying budget secrets to a businessman or to anybody else, and he was exonerated. It is conceivable that if this matter is referred to a committee, the minister for housing could very well be exonerated. That would be the end of it and I would not lose my seat. But Parliament will at least have been given an opportunity to examine the evidence, an opportunity which we cannot possibly have within the precise four corners of question period. It is impossible to go into the kind of detail in question period that can be done in the course of a committee hearing. I submit that the evidence is mounting and, notwithstanding the assurance today of the minister of housing whereby he stated categorically that there was not a budget leak, there is mounting evidence that there were persons outside of cabinet, outside the House, who had knowledge of the budget prior to the budget being delivered to the House.

If this matter goes to committee, I would attempt to establish that it is physically and logistically impossible for an