

the industry was able to jump the gun and increase the price of gasoline last week.

I have absolutely no choice but to raise this fundamental problem of parliamentary democracy. When we have a government that is responsible to this House, the Minister of Finance has to take all the necessary steps to ensure that there is absolutely no leak. I realize that a pair of mukluks is more leaky than a pair of shoes. Also I realize that the hon. minister has no choice but to reveal to the House what happened. In order to help him to clarify the question of whether there was a leak—and I think there was a leak—in my judgment he will have to take his responsibility in the best British tradition.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Keno-ra-Rainy River (Mr. Reid):

That the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections be instructed to investigate the advance knowledge by journalists and others of measures to be proposed in the budget, including proposed changes in corporate and commodity taxes, in advance of the delivery of the budget; and that the committee report its findings no later than December 31, 1979, and in the absence of a final report, make an interim report by that date.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is really straining with this motion. First I will submit to Your Honour that there is no question of privilege whatsoever.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Precisely.

**Mr. Crosbie:** But just let me say on a factual basis that there has been no budget leak. There was certainly no budget leak for which I am responsible. There was no budget leak from the Department of Finance. There was no leak, period.

Everyone in the country has known for some months that the Government of Canada is involved in negotiations with the provinces over the energy situation. It has been known in public documents tabled at the first ministers' conference and given to the government of Saskatchewan, the government of Alberta, and to the government of British Columbia. It was known to dozens of officials in the government that there were being contemplated energy price increases and an excise tax. They were given to the government of Ontario, every government in Canada. They were filed at the first ministers' conference.

It was widely known that there was likely to be an energy tax, and there was speculation to that effect. Some speculators said that it would be 30 cents, some said that it would be 20 cents, some said that it would be 25 cents. In actual fact it was 17 cents.

**Mr. Lalonde:** You are not even right. It is 18 cents.

**Mr. Crosbie:** If we look at the report of Mr. Craig Oliver of Monday, December 10, Mr. Oliver was guessing like everybody else. He guessed the 25 cents, and he guessed wrong because the increase to the personal consumer is not 25 cents; it is 17 cents.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** It is 18 cents.

*Privilege—Mr. Chrétien*

**Mr. Crosbie:** I am sorry, 18 cents.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Crosbie:** When we look at this broadcast again, what do we see? Mr. Craig Oliver said that the rise in corporate income tax "will be a heavy blow to major corporations; they face a jump of a full five points from the present income tax rate of 46 per cent to 51 per cent; government insiders say the increase will raise as much as \$2 billion." That is completely inaccurate. There is no accuracy to it at all. It is not correct—incorrect to the last degree. The increase of 5 per cent is in corporate surtax, Mr. Speaker. The 5 per cent corporate surtax will raise \$370 million in the year to come. That is not even near \$2 billion. It is really stretching the point. There was no increase in the corporate tax rate at all. So much for that allegation!

Then Mr. Oliver went on to say or to guess that there would be an energy tax credit. The possibility of an energy tax credit was discussed with all the governments that I have mentioned. They were aware of the fact that there might be an energy tax credit. Mr. Oliver suggested that there would be some incentives, that low income families would get assistance. He said that any Canadian whose income is less than \$18,000 a year would receive a flat energy tax credit of \$80. That is not accurate at all. It is every Canadian who has an income of up to \$21,380 a year. So, on and on it goes.

Let us look at the rest of his report. He said that in the budget we would beef up grants for home insulation programs. That was not done in the budget. He said that we would offer generous tax incentives to convert furnaces from oil to natural gas. That is not in the budget.

**An hon. Member:** You should have done it.

**Mr. Crosbie:** On and on it goes. There was no leak in the budget secrecy process. But let me say that we are trying to open up the budgetary process. There is quite a difference between a budget leak which could give people a chance to make a large amount of money on the stock market or whatever, if they had inside knowledge, and some speculation that there will be an excise tax increase or not an excise tax increase, or whatever. So this is just in the realm of speculation.

In addition the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) yesterday, when asked a question in the House, denied that there was any budget leak. He denied the fact that there was any budget leak.

**An hon. Member:** How does he know?

**Mr. Crosbie:** This broadcast was made on Monday evening. That denial has not been accepted by the hon. member for Saint-Maurice (Mr. Chrétien) who should know better.

I should like to refer to a statement made by Your Honour on April 17, 1978, where you ruled on a matter which involved the hon. member for Saint-Maurice. It was alleged that there had been leaks in connection with certain sales tax proposals. I