

Privilege

The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier has a brief matter which I am prepared to hear, and then I will hear the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the debate this morning, and I would now like to explain very briefly why this ad, published at great expense in newspapers across the country, in English and in French, is open to a very specific interpretation, at least in the French version.

I want to go back to the text of the ad which appeared in the newspapers on August 26 this year. In French, it reads as follows: "*Le 1er janvier 1991, le régime de la taxe fédérale de vente connaîtra des modifications. Veuillez conserver cet avis.*" So far, I believe the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner), the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) and others said what needed to be said. However, the ad goes on to read as follows: "*Il explique les modifications apportées et les raisons qui y président —*".

In the French text, the word "apportées" indicates that the changes were made, were adopted. That is not the case in the English text.

[English]

It explains the changes made. We do not say that in English. We say that it explains the changes and the reasons for them. But in French, Mr. Speaker, it says the changes "made". It seems to me a very clear point of intent. If that is true, then it changes the whole dynamics of how one speaks to Canadians in one's language.

I will send you the appropriate text, Mr. Speaker. I think you have the French text, but I will send it to you.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I could mention Maingot's comments on contempt and privilege. I think Hon. Members already heard my leader and my parliamentary House Leader speak with considerable eloquence on the subject. My point is simply that this Government cannot use its majority to make Canadians believe that they and they alone can change taxes in Canada. Parliament, Mr. Speaker, has that authority. I maintain it is a violation of

the privileges of Parliament, of this House of every single Member, both on the Government and on the Opposition side, to have paid the princely sum of \$800,000 for a newspaper advertisement which says: The changes in the Income Tax Act have now been made. Make way for the 9 per cent tax!

• (1250)

Mr. Speaker, my Leader in the House reminds me that both languages, both in this advertisement and according to our custom here in the House, are equally valid. If I look at the French text, it is clear we have no choice: The die is cast. The tax will become effective on January 1, 1991, come hell or high water. Mr. Speaker, I object to this practice, and I am absolutely against an interpretation that is not reflected in the other language. In fact, only one message should be given here, and that is a message from the House to Canadians who are listening, a message which I think must be clear. The Government has violated the privileges of this House by going to great expense to place an ad that is false and inaccurate and conveys a message that is entirely incorrect.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I have indicated to the House that I think I have probably heard sufficient argument. If the hon. member is rising because he feels that there is some point that has not been touched upon, I will hear him very briefly, but I think we should move on.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, yes, I will respect your clarification at the beginning as to just what we are debating. It is not the content of the tax bill, but just the contempt of Parliament.

I rise to add something that has not been stated in this debate. Prior to making your decision, Mr. Speaker, I request that you or your staff walk across from your office to the parliamentary reading room. You will see that the same ad has been put in all of the major ethnocultural newspapers in Canada. I just had an opportunity to look briefly yesterday at the same ad given in the *Novy Domov*, the Czechoslovak bi-weekly; the *Zwjaz Kowiec*, the Polish bi-weekly; *Meie Elu*, Our Life, the Estonian weekly; *Latvije—Amerika*; *Kanadsky—Slovák*, the Canadian-Slovak; *Homin Ukrainy*, the Ukrainian Echo; the *Tėviskės Ziburiai*, the Lithuanian weekly; the