

*Alleged Tax Reform Propaganda*

• (2:30 p.m.)

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

minister introduces a piece of legislation the taxpayers' money will be used for television programs, radio programs and newspaper advertisements? The minister himself let the cat out of the bag when he was answering the hon. member for Crowfoot by saying that if he had something reasonable to suggest the government would agree to include his views. Is the minister to decide what is a reasonable amendment? Are we now to be allowed to have our views put to the country by the generosity and consent of ministers opposite?

There is only one way we can have a free debate in this country and that is on the basis of those who hold certain views advancing those views at their own expense and not at the expense of the taxpayers of the country.

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

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the decision you have to make on whether this is a basic question of privilege, let me state that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre set out no precedent to support his point with the possible exception of an oral opinion of our former colleague, the Hon. Judy LaMarsh. Notwithstanding the authority of her opinion, I think what is paramount is the fact that this is not a basic question of privilege. The point which clearly the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre missed, that while they thought it to be perfectly and legally justifiable for the government to use public funds to print and issue the white paper and press releases based on it they deny that funds should be used for certain modern visual aids to supplement it.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!**An hon. Member:** What about television?

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** The hon. member says "What about television?" Indeed, an extension of the argument of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is that one should not use any of these means, visual aids or audio aids, in order to assist in the exposition of any government program. The member for Winnipeg North Centre suffers from a high-button shoes mentality. May I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that all these categories are in the same class. The real situation is that there is a generation gap between the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre—

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):**—and the rest of the country. I think we should bear in mind that this is the silly season for the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. This time last year he was talking about clearing the galleries. I suggest that his point of privilege in this connection should be given the same effect as last year, that is, rejected.

**Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca):** Mr. Speaker, in rising to defend their abuse of public funds both ministers have indicated that in their view this is one way to get people to participate in democracy. So far as I am concerned all they are actually doing is getting the Canadian public to participate only in discussion of Liberal policies.

**Mr. Benson:** Proposals.

**Mr. Yewchuk:** The Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker, has counter-proposals and its own views on taxation. The New Democratic Party has its view on taxation, as has the Social Credit Party. On no occasion have these parties used public funds to promote their own ideas in this regard.

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

**Mr. Yewchuk:** It is as wrong to say that what the government has now done is to engage in participatory democracy as it would be if each of the three other parties requested government funds to promote their own personal and private views on these various topics.

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

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérald Laniel (Beauharnois):** Mr. Speaker, it might be a good thing to let the Canadian public know the reaction of the opposition to the reform of the parliamentary system, of the working methods of members of Parliament and of information in general.

Everyone knows that in the last few months the Liberal caucus has tried to adopt new structures. In that regard, the opposition made only negative criticisms. It was never thought that members of parliament could do anything else in the House but negative and destructive work at which members of the opposition seem to be expert.

About the new methods, the whip of the Conservative Progressive party—