

*Privilege—Mr. Huntington*

carried the amendments to this section of the Income Tax Act, giving it broader powers.

Because of the election in May, 1979, the new Minister of Finance was obliged to provide legal authority for measures which had occurred in the 1979 tax year. Mr. Speaker, I refer you to *Hansard* of October 29, 1979, Page 706, where the then Minister of Finance presented the items within the Chrétien Budget. I quote:

Essentially the bill contains the income tax measures of the last budget of our predecessor administration.

On October 29, 1979, in *Hansard* on page 708, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray), the then Finance critic for the Official Opposition, said:

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill obviously is to pass into formal law the proposals in the budget of November, 1978 presented by the last Liberal government.

So the Liberal Party acknowledges that the amendment was in the Chrétien Budget of 1978 and that all we were doing was making legal, as was our obligation as a Government, measures that were to be brought into law as a result of the Budget Speech.

In addition to that inaccuracy and allegation, Sir, the Minister said in reply to a question by the Hon. Member for Welland that the Member for Capilano had asked her that same question. If you refer to *Hansard*, and the question asked, Sir, you will find that I did not ask the question the Hon. Member for Welland asked because what I was seeking an answer to was about pensions garnished by Revenue Canada in amounts over \$600, which, by the way, was an amendment to the Chrétien Budget made by the Clark Government when it presented that legislation. The original power asked for was authority to garnishee absolutely; that was softened because of the implications we see in the land today.

Now, had the original Budget and the Ways and Means Bill of November 16, 1978 passed, the Minister would have been authorized to "require". In the Crosbie amendment to that authority, it was limited to amounts over \$600. Therefore, when the Minister alleges that the Progressive Conservative Party is guilty of this "tax grab", she has done so quite improperly, Sir, and I believe she should rise and apologize for that imputed allegation.

**An Hon. Member:** What is the question?

**Mr. Huntington:** The question of privilege is that the Minister of National Health and Welfare has misled the House and has made improper allegations with respect to the Official Opposition and should correct the record.

Another point of my question of privilege concerning where the Minister has misled, Mr. Speaker, is that when pensioners have been garnished by the Minister of National Revenue, the only way they can protest that garnishment is to apply to the Minister of National Health and Welfare or her Department for a guaranteed income supplement to lessen the hard-

ship which has been imposed by the Minister of National Revenue.

In her reply to the Hon. Member for Welland on January 26, she said she was in negotiation with the Minister of National Revenue, which she does not have the power to do. The only power she has, Sir, is when there is hardship created by a garnishment of pension; she can then grant a guaranteed income supplement to offset the hardship, which is a signal to the Minister of National Revenue that he must back off the garnishment order.

In three areas, therefore, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Health and Welfare has misled the House and has been totally inaccurate in her allegation that the Progressive Conservative Party is responsible for the legislation which now applies in terms of Revenue Canada and its attack on pensioners. She has admitted that there are several hundred cases where hardship is being caused; and I feel she should do the right thing, Sir, and stand in her place and apologize for the inaccuracy of her allegation.

In addition, Sir, may I remind the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Government that in two Bills in the Thirty-second Parliament, that aspect of Section 224 of the Income Tax Act has been further toughened by amendments in Bill C-54 and Bill C-139. The power of the Minister of National Revenue has been further strengthened in the matter of garnisheeing payments due to provinces and other Departments of the Government. The Minister should do the right thing, Sir, correct the record and remove the implied inference of "tax grab" with respect to both myself and my Party.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Of course, Mr. Speaker, it is up to you to decide whether this is indeed a question of privilege. After listening to the Hon. Member, I think it is simply that he is not satisfied with the facts I gave. Therefore, I have no intention to withdraw anything or to offer my apologies. I am not too sure about what so upset him, except perhaps the truth, in the sense that I did say—unfortunately, I have just received *Hansard*—I did say that when the Conservatives were in office they were the ones who let this Bill come into effect through Royal Assent.

I did not go into all the details mentioned by the Hon. Member, but one thing is certain, and if the Hon. Member does not even understand what I have just said, I will repeat, they did nothing to stop the proceedings, meaning that when they want to act as do-gooders and accuse others of resorting to well established practices, they should first do their homework and ascertain the facts before they make them public. That is all I was talking about.