

in the news media with respect to at least some of the discussions that may have taken place within the committee.

It has been very properly pointed out that the committee has not completed its deliberations. I think that the proper position for the Speaker to take is that at least for now it is a matter with the committee, and the committee will have to deal with it as it sees fit. I am going to leave the matter at that for now.

I thank hon. members for their intervention.

I do want to say this, as I have said before, if a committee is working under understandings that discussions are confidential, it goes without saying that if those discussions are repeated outside the committee it creates difficulties within the committee and invites the kind of discussions we have had. I would ask all hon. members to be careful.

However, I do find—and this is my ruling—that the matter complained about is a matter that at least for now should be taken up in the committee.

CONTENT OF BROCHURES—PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, on September 25 in this House the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition raised a question of privilege concerning certain advertisements that the government placed dealing with the goods and services tax.

On page 3809 of *Hansard* the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition stated:

I submit to Your Honour that the advertisement not only misrepresents the substance of the text but the procedure to which it is subject under parliamentary rules. It prejudices the proceedings that are now before a committee of the House, the Standing Committee on Finance, as well as prejudicing future proceedings and decisions of the House itself.

Subsequently, on October 10, Your Honour gave a ruling on that question of privilege. In the course of the ruling, as recorded at page 4461 of *Hansard*, Your Honour said:

I expect the Department of Finance and other departments to study this ruling carefully and remind everyone within the Public Service that we are a parliamentary democracy, not a so-called executive democracy, nor a so-called administrative democracy.

Privilege

Your Honour, you can imagine my horror when I arrived back in my constituency a week ago Friday and had received in that office a letter from one of my constituents, one George Flower. He had recently been in a neighbourhood Loblaw's store and picked up a package of brochures on the goods and services tax that were being handed out to the public by way of display in that store. I thought perhaps the brochures which I will refer to in a moment had simply been withdrawn or something. In accordance with Your Honour's ruling I understand the advertisements have been.

I telephoned this same Loblaw's store in Kingston this morning—I assume it was the same one—at 10.25. I asked the gentleman who answered, who worked in the bakery of that Loblaw's store, whether in fact these goods and services brochures were still available. He said: "Just a moment and I will check". He went out, checked, then came back and reported to me that they were in fact available and could be picked up in the store.

Let me quote from the first one. It is called *Goods and Services Tax: Questions and Answers*. The first question that it asks is: "What is the Goods and Services Tax?". The answer given in the brochure is: "The goods and services tax, GST, is a 9 per cent consumption tax that will replace the existing federal sales tax on January 1, 1991".

I could go on. There are other questions, but let me read a couple more of the quotations to make my point: "The GST will apply to virtually all goods and services sold in Canada. However, Canadians will not be charged tax when they buy any of the following goods and services." There is a long list of the exemptions.

• (1130)

Then it says: "For consumers the GST will be similar to a retail sales tax. It will be charged at 9 per cent of the retail price of goods and services. The GST will replace the existing federal sales tax which is buried at the manufacturer's level."

It goes on to detail the tax credits that will be allowed. It says that income tax will be reduced from 26 to 25 per cent. Then it lists a list of benefits that I will not describe. I think that they are, perhaps, not accurate.