

I listened today to his explanation and found that the one thing which stands out is that he dealt exclusively with the sales taxes, in other words, with those matters in respect of which he discussed the probabilities and possibilities as to what course would be taken with the provinces. However, he did not refer to the petroleum and gas terms. Did he deal with those matters in his talks with the provinces? That is a simple question. No reference was made by him at all with regard to gas, oil, and petroleum. Naturally one wonders when one hears a good argument which covers everything but the facts which might be embarrassing. Did he discuss with the provinces matters concerning changes in terms regarding oil, petroleum, and mining?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I did not discuss those matters at all with the provincial ministers of finance. We discussed the general economy, we discussed the situation of the Canadian dollar, and so on. The only specific item that could have been in the budget that I mentioned to them and on which I asked them if they were agreeable, was the sales tax. I did not raise the matter of the RRSP, nor did I discuss with them the questions of oil, gas, and any of the other items. The only specific item that was found in the budget that I discussed in a hypothetical way with the provincial ministers of finance, who, I understand, discussed it with their own cabinets, was the possibility of a joint agreement on the sales tax.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, the statement made now by the minister clarifies the situation. Apparently Your Honour was under the impression that the representations or the discussions with the provinces covered the whole gamut. They did not, and the minister frankly said so. Therefore, there was a leak, and it has no reference whatsoever to the discussion with the provinces. That is the point I am making, and I have listened to the minister with great care. He has been frank, and his answer indicates that somebody within the Department of Finance or within the cabinet, or some of the officials, did discuss this matter and did make it available to the press.

I point out that a couple of years ago in 19—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) might have a separate question of privilege. However, I would remind him and the House that we are dealing today with the continuation of the question of privilege raised yesterday by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby.

The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby based his question of privilege yesterday on an article in the *Toronto Star*, which contained in its opening sentence the assertion that in his budget the finance minister would put forward a provision which would enable the provinces to reduce the sales tax—I do not remember the exact wording. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby raised yesterday a question of privilege based on a specific assertion in that article which related to an agreement between the federal government and the provinces in respect of the sales tax. If there is another point on other aspects of the budget relating to petroleum or any other features in the budget, in my opinion that is a separate point

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entirely, which the right hon. gentleman, of course, has the right to deal with as he wishes. However, the argument that the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby is confined to is the sales tax provision. That was the nature of his argument yesterday, and which was addressed by the Minister of Finance today. It is that point on which I have to make a ruling.

● (1552)

If there is another matter of privilege with respect to the budget, I would be glad to hear it.

Mr. Diefenbaker: If I may complete my remarks, I am glad to have it clarified that we are dealing only with the question of sales taxes. There would be no particular opportunity to make a profit there if the information got out. The essence of the rule concerning budget secrecy was dealt with in 1977 by the seminar held in Ottawa in Canadian Studies. It states:

—no one should be able to gain a private advantage by reason of advance information about matters to be dealt with in a budget.

If it is restricted to the question of sales taxes, I cannot argue that. However, as far as oil companies and mining companies are concerned, they would be in a wonderful position.

We have often wondered in connection with investment if it would be wise to go to fortune tellers to find out what is going to happen. Those who read this article in connection with the oil industry and the like certainly must have had second sight, perfect sight, psychopathic sight, or fortune teller sight.

MRS. HOLT—STATEMENT ON WOMEN IN WORK FORCE

Mrs. Simma Holt (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege arises out of something that was said during the question period. As one of the few women members in this House I feel obliged to correct a misleading statement—I am sure an inadvertently misleading comment made by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald). Women are not only in the work force out of need, but also by choice and as a right to share in the building and growth of their country. It is as a result of this government's leadership in recognizing women as vital partners in the economic and social strength—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

First report of Standing Committee on Agriculture—Mr. Smith (Saint-Jean).

[*Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.*]