

*Privilege—Mr. J. Turner*

I think it has been a very useful process. They report directly to the Assistant Deputy Minister of taxation in the Department of Finance. I know the advice he received from them is greatly appreciated. Certainly he hopes this process will be able to continue unimpeded by the type of controversy that the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition is trying to generate today with his question of privilege.

In response to the comments of the NDP House Leader, these people are chosen by Department of Finance officials. I was not asked to designate people who might participate.

**Mr. Orlikow:** Who are they?

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** As a matter of fact, I think I know about one-fifth of them. Some of them I never heard of before I was involved in this process. It is casting aspersions on the integrity of these individuals for the NDP House Leader to suggest that they are political appointees. That is not true. They are chosen by officials in the Department of Finance based on their professional competence.

I listened carefully to what the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition was saying about how we had chosen these people to give them a head start. I would love to have more people involved in the process, but there is a certain limit, still making it a useful process. There has to be sufficient dialogue with the people involved, so there is a good understanding of the range of proposals which would be involved and decisions can be taken accordingly. To say they are political appointees, or to imply that they are doing this so they can get a head start on their competition casts very serious doubt on the motivations of these people. They are serving as advisors without pay—

**Some Hon. Members:** Poor them.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** —because they are good Canadians. I think the Right Hon. Member should think very carefully about whether he should be casting the motivation of these individuals in doubt, because again—Mr. Speaker, Members opposite cannot keep their mouths shut. They will not listen to the argument on this side of the House.

**Mr. Frith:** Who are they?

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** If Hon. Members would care to listen they might learn something.

**Mr. Speaker:** I know Hon. Members will want to hear the Minister. As I said, there may be points he makes that Hon. Members will wish to comment on. I indicated I will recognize Hon. Members for that purpose. I ask Hon. Members to allow the Minister to finish.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I draw this to your attention because I feel it is a very important consideration in the whole process. We have to be able to have the appropriate consultation during the budget process in order that the best advice can be given to the Government to make the whole process of tax policy a better one which will result in

fewer problems. That is why I think it is important that Hon. Members refrain from casting aspersions on the motivation of the people involved or the whole process.

As I said, the thing I found difficult to follow in what the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition was saying was whether he was concerned that these people got a head start, or whether there is something new in this whole business of seeking advice from this type of individual. It should not be a matter for consideration by this House of whether or not one group of lawyers, because of their involvement in this process, is involved before the actual paper is brought down. The facts are that there is a rotation. I know people who have been involved in this process in the past and who were not involved in the process prior to this White Paper. That is an important consideration.

Both the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the NDP House Leader made an important point of the fact that this is being done at eight o'clock after the markets are closed. Why are we doing it then? I want to point out that the timing of my three Budgets was 4.30 in the afternoon. That is when markets close. If we stayed at 4.30 then there might be some reason to say why then and not at three in the afternoon because we had chosen that time as precisely the time when markets close so we would not have that problem with this statement tomorrow.

• (1530)

The precise reason for choosing the time of eight o'clock for the statement is, as many Hon. Members have said, that tax reform is going to affect a large number of Canadians. In fact, every Canadian will be affected by tax reform in one way or another. For that reason I believed that eight o'clock, when the White Paper proposals could receive maximum exposure, was the best time to choose in order to serve our constituents well.

I know Hon. Members opposite may not like that because they are afraid that there will be a lot of good news in this White Paper on tax reform. That concern is very valid. The point is that that was the reason for choosing the time of eight o'clock.

The Leader of the Opposition has referred to the fact that I have given notice of a Ways and Means motion. It is quite clear that a Ways and Means motion will be tabled tomorrow evening. However, I want to make it very clear that the people who have been involved in this process have not in any way been party to the details of anything that will be in that Ways and Means motion. That is a statement of fact.

The point of the matter which we are discussing is related to whether the Department should expose itself to advice from experts. I think it is very important that we have this advice and recognize that the advice is on-going. The advice from the people who have been involved did not stop two or three weeks ago. It continues today and will continue into the future after the presentation of the White Paper. We have asked them to participate in order to learn whether technical elements in the