

grams are not negligible in term of human exchanges. The costs of these programs this year will amount to \$12,000.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Evans: Madam Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Madam Speaker: The questions enumerated by the Parliamentary Secretary have been answered. Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. John Evans (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

Madam Speaker: Shall the notices of motions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS— MOTIONS

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order please. Shall all orders listed under Notices of Motions preceding order No. 90 be allowed to stand by unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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THE BUDGET, APRIL, 1983

ADVISABILITY OF ESTABLISHING SPECIAL COMMITTEE RESPECTING DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I am almost 15 minutes late for a House Leaders' meeting. I wonder if I might seek the unanimous consent of the House to permit the Hon. Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) to speak to the motion standing in my name. He is even more capable than I of doing so.

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the first part of the request.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I agree with everything that has been said as well.

The Budget

Mr. Nielsen moved:

That a Special Committee be appointed to inquire into all the circumstances relating to or associated with the disclosure of Budget information by the Minister of Finance on Monday, April 18, 1983;

That the Committee consist of eleven (11) Members of the House; and

That the Committee have the power to send for persons, papers and records.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, I hope that this will be another Opposition motion that the Government will accept, because it is certainly reasonable and rational. It is time that the question of budget secrecy or otherwise in Canada had ventilation.

The motion refers to an incident which occurred on last April 18. We have had a number of instances of budget leaks but that was the first time in Canadian history that the budget leaker was actually caught in the process of leaking. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) was caught in the process of leaking, by television. The television cameras were actually in the room and took photographs of the Minister leaking. This is the first time in history, as far as I know, that the situation has actually occurred.

All we ask is that a committee be appointed to inquire into the circumstances and send for persons, papers and records. This was originally raised as a breach of privilege by the Opposition House Leader on April 19. The incident came about because, as the Minister said in a statement that he added to his budget on April 19, he received a group of photographers in his office on April 18 as part of a pre-budget photo opportunity session. That Minister in particular should not be one to give photo opportunities. He did give a photo opportunity, however, and a copy of the budget speech was on his desk. He held it up, he turned the pages, and he had a cameraman standing behind him. The cameraman took pictures of the pages with a zoom lens as he turned them, and it became clear later when the pictures were developed that they had budget information. They had the amount that was going to be spent on a recovery program and the amount the Government deficit was going to be—\$31.2 billion. This was all revealed on the night of April 18 rather than as part of the budget on April 19. That was the information that was disclosed before the House received the budget.

It was held by Her Honour, the Speaker, that the violation of budget secrecy, if there was one, did not necessarily breach the privileges of the House of Commons. She did not find that there had been a breach of the privileges of the House.

What is budget secrecy? It is a tradition of Parliament based on the common law of this House. It is based on the traditions of this House. There is no statute that I know of, no particular law that requires the Minister of Finance to keep secret the details of the contents of a budget until they are announced in the House. In England and in the Commonwealth and in parliamentary countries of the world there are these traditions of budget secrecy. They are necessary so that conflicts of interest will not arise and so that unauthorized people will not make money through having advance knowledge of what is in the budget.