

Oral Questions

APPEARANCE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS BEFORE BAR OF HOUSE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest to the Deputy Prime Minister that if cabinet Ministers have nothing to hide, they should not fear the truth. The entire Conservative front bench seems to have a case of collective amnesia as to what happened after that telephone call was received.

It seems inconceivable to me that a decision to keep the information from the Minister of Finance should have been made on the authority of senior officials alone. Either the Deputy Prime Minister or the Prime Minister must have had something to do with it, on the assumption that the Minister of Finance did not know, as he told the House.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister agree to a procedure which we have not used here for some time but which is part of the rules of the House of Commons, which will allow all Canadians to find out what really happened after that phone call was received and will allow them to decide for themselves whether or not the Government has acted properly or improperly? Will the Government agree to call before the bar of the House of Commons Mr. Paul Tellier, the Clerk of the Privy Council, Mr. Stanley Hartt, chief of staff of the Prime Minister of Canada, and Mr. Fred Gorbet, the Deputy Minister of Finance, to answer questions about when and how they advised the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Minister of Finance of this second leak?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition was not here on Friday, and I would suggest that since he was not here he should have taken the time to read the exchange that took place.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Where is the Minister of Finance, by the way?

Mr. Mazankowski: The Minister of Finance is attending to important financial matters.

An Hon. Member: He should be here.

Mr. Mazankowski: To respond to the charade from the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, nonsense. He has more important things to do like defending the interests

of Canada, defending the interests of the Canadian economy and the dollar.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: It is this kind of misleading information that is hurled across the House of Commons that has made it difficult to deal with this issue.

The Minister of Finance made it very clear that he was informed some time after Question Period on the 27th. He made that very clear. Now the Leader of the Opposition stands up and says for some reason or other that I withheld information from him. If you have proof of that, sir, come on, bring out the facts and stop the political run around.

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Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Prime Minister. I am sad to hear that the Deputy Prime Minister thinks that there are better things to do than to be accountable to the people of Canada.

First Canadians learned of the budget leak through a television reporter who received the Budget in a gas station. Then we found out about another copy of the Budget being circulated in a bar in the east end, later the same document was found at a racetrack, and then to an \$11 billion financial institution.

Given the latest revelations that the Budget was found where else but on a bus in the City of Ottawa, is this not proof enough of the incompetence of this Government? Does this not prove to the Deputy Prime Minister that the Minister of Finance should be recalled home immediately and the officials should be called before the bar to answer to the people of Canada through the House of Commons?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member suggests that he is apologizing to me for my not being accountable to the people of Canada.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): That is not what he said.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, that is what he said. I have been accountable to the people of Canada for 21 years and 7 elections, and I have been accountable for