

The Budget

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1700)

Mr. Speaker: I want to advise all Hon. Members that, as I am bound to do by the Special Order, I intend to read the beginning of the motion. However, I want to say that I am anticipating points of order. I ask the co-operation of the House to allow me to do what I am directed to do under the Special Order. I will stop short of recognizing the Minister and then I will hear points of order.

It being five o'clock p.m., pursuant to order made Wednesday, April 19, 1989, the House will proceed to Ways and Means Proceeding No. 1.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

Hon. Michael Wilson (minister of Finance) moved:

That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the Government.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speake, I rise on a point of order. The process has been soiled. The House has been betrayed.

The motion you just read received unanimous consent on April 19, 1989, and the Official Opposition would like at this time to make certain comments regarding that unanimous consent.

Our understanding was that we were to deal with a Budget speech prepared and presented in the traditional way, including all the traditional security measures that were taken for granted by all of us here for several years.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, we had every confidence in the budgetary process. We had every confidence in the Minister of Finances' integrity. We had every confidence in the Government's honesty towards the House of Commons, in the Justice Minister's honesty. Our trust was betrayed.

[*English*]

We were deceived. Our trust was betrayed. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) has been extremely negligent. He did not take appropriate measures to protect the integrity of the budgetary process.

Last night, the Government House Leader was not straight, honest and above board with this House.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gauthier: He made no attempt to talk to other Party Leaders in the House so as to share with them his concerns about the extremely important situation the Government was in. He did not preserve the integrity of the budgetary process. He did not uphold the integrity of his ministry. He was deceitful and less than honest when he attempted to tar the Opposition Parties—

Mr. Andre: Order!

Some Hon. Members: Come on!

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the Hon. Member can express his concerns in more appropriate language and I would ask him to do so.

Mr. Gauthier: In consequence, the Official Opposition withdraws its unanimous support for this motion adopted April 19, 1989 and says so openly. We disagree with the Government.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Some days ago you asked if there would be unanimous consent for a Special Order that would permit the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) to read his Budget for the first time so that all the people of Canada would have an opportunity to hear the Budget statement in the House of Commons. We gave our unanimous consent. We felt that was the time-honoured tradition of the House, and have always done it that way. We were quite prepared to give unanimous consent to have it done in 1989.

However, some things have happened since that came before the House. I do not have to remind you necessarily that at seven o'clock last night the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) had a decision to make. He had been informed that there was a leak. He was aware of the details that someone had possessed in terms of the Budget.

He could have made two decisions. He had a choice. One would have been to recognize that a massive blunder had occurred and that he ought to call for the resignation of the Minister of Finance and start the process over again properly and have a Budget later. However, he decided to push ahead. In spite of the fact that there were a number of people in the country who had leaked information, who had privileged information—