

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I think the question raised by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition— I want to go back to what I said yesterday, Mr. Speaker. As soon as a journalist appeared on television with a document which was obviously a Budget document, the RCMP immediately started an investigation on all circumstances surrounding the incident.

And I specifically asked at that moment, Mr. Speaker— because, naturally, the leak of a Budget document one day before— I immediately asked for an investigation on whether some people could have profited from the leak of a Budget document before the Budget was tabled.

And it is precisely for that reason that we asked for an investigation right from the start, Mr. Speaker. To reassure Canadians, yesterday the Commissioner of the RCMP told me that, so far, his investigation couldn't find any evidence to the effect that some people could have profited from the Budget leak.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that this Government has acted in a responsible manner.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Solicitor General said that the RCMP has been aware of a second leak since the beginning, three weeks ago.

Despite the Prime Minister's statement here in this House that the Solicitor General would immediately report any information to this House, he hasn't done so.

[English]

POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER BUDGET LEAKS—MINISTERIAL
ACCOUNTABILITY

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is again directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. We want to know whether in fact there was another second or third leak. The Minister of Justice said there might have been more. That is what he said to the House yesterday.

We want to know that because this is not a police matter. This is a matter of ministerial accountability, specifically that of the Minister of Finance to the House

of Commons. It is accountability not to the police but to Parliament.

Therefore, I put my question once again to the Deputy Prime Minister. On what day, at what time were Ministers of the Government, specifically the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General informed of the fact that there was another leak, second, third or fourth, of Budget information? Why was that information not given immediately to the House of Commons?

• (1120)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the right hon. gentleman, it is indeed a matter for the police. He will know if he reads the newspapers, and I know that he does, that the headline of *The Globe and Mail* of April 28 reads: "Many leaks reported to special RCMP unit". The article goes on to state:

The RCMP yesterday expanded its investigation of Wednesday's budget leak to include a number of other leaks reported before Finance Minister Michael Wilson's embarrassing admission that someone had let slip his budget.

The article goes on to quote an RCMP spokesman. It states:

"Every report will be investigated," said RCMP spokesman Denis Deveau. We're not just out in the corridor on this one. We've got the wideangle lens on it, and we've a lot of guys working on it."

I could go on to cite a number of other incidents.

Mr. Kevin Newman reporting on the CTV network acknowledged a potential leak with respect to the Ottawa TV affiliate.

We have an Hon. Member of the House who suggested that he had prior knowledge of the Budget.

Mr. Tobin: Answer the question.

Mr. Mazankowski: There were many allegations. All of the allegations are indeed being investigated by the RCMP.

Why does the right hon. gentleman insist on attempting to interfere with the process of an RCMP investigation?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!