

Privilege

If these words are on the record and if the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) are serious about their responsibilities, and in particular if the Prime Minister is serious about his responsibilities, he will insist that the Minister of Finance resign and that there be a new Budget. The Canadian people, through their elected representatives in this House, deserve no less. They deserved far better from the Minister of Finance last night. They deserve far better from the Minister of Finance today, the Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister, then the inept, unconvincing crocodile tears about how the Minister of Finance mismanaged his responsibilities.

I think it is clear that the Minister of Finance must resign. This Budget must be withdrawn. Otherwise there is no way that the democratic process and the role of this House can be taken seriously any longer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I want to rise to make a couple of points in response to the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) and the Opposition House Leader for whom I have a great deal of respect in a parliamentary sense. I want to say that in all sincerity, but I believe they are distorting the interpretation of Standing Order 28(3) and I think it has to be clarified once and for all.

They are suggesting in the House today, Mr. Speaker, that you could have called the House back sometime last night without the consent of the opposition Parties. I think that would have been physically impossible—

Mr. Tobin: What about last summer?

Mr. Mazankowski: Can you just wait a minute? I think it would have been physically impossible because, in order for the Speaker to do so after being satisfied that there was an emergency situation and indeed it was in the public interest to resume the sitting of the House, it would have then been necessary for the Speaker to give notice to every individual Member of Parliament.

An Hon. Member: So?

Mr. Mazankowski: The Speaker has to ensure that adequate notice has been served. What is adequate notice, Mr. Speaker? Perhaps in the course of rendering a decision you will be able to elaborate on that, but I

think you will find that generally, when we talk about tradition, convention and precedents, it is at least 48 hours.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Oh, come on!

Mr. Mazankowski: At least 48 hours. I know there have been cases when there has been a special Order Paper initiated in 24 hours.

Mr. Tobin: You can't have it both ways.

Mr. Mazankowski: If you had decided that indeed there was a case of an emergency, it would have been impossible to convene the House on that basis, under Standing Order 28(3), for at least 24 hours or possibly 48 hours.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: Everyone should know that the only way that this House could have come back sometime last night, whether it be at ten o'clock, twelve o'clock, one o'clock or two o'clock in the morning, would have been with the unanimous consent of all the Members of the House.

Mr. Gauthier: Nonsense. That is nonsense. Once again you are distorting the rules.

Mr. Mazankowski: Second, after convening the House, what would have been the order of business? There was no order for that day. There would be no Order Paper. Again, for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) to introduce, produce and present his Budget to the House would have required unanimous consent. On a double case, we would have needed unanimous consent on both counts.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): You know it, John.

Mr. Mazankowski: That is the point that the Hon. Members across are overlooking. You have two cases.

What the House Leader outlined are the steps that the Government took in the best traditions of parliamentary democracy to call the House back under consent—

Ms. Copps: Resign.

Mr. Peterson: You're desperate.

Mr. Mazankowski: I am not desperate. I am as good a parliamentarian as you are, and I have done as much as you have to preserve parliamentary tradition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!