

Oral Questions

However, at the same time I believe I would not be rendering a service to the political life of this country, to our system of governing in this country, or to the country—

Mr. Clark: To honour standards.

Mr. Lalonde: —if I were to allow the kind of smears we have heard from the other side to prevail and to lead to decisions by Ministers in the future—

Mr. Clark: To honour your own guidelines. What a contemptible response.

Mr. Lalonde: I think that would be a very, very wrong precedent to establish.

● (1140)

1980 BUDGET—REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER UNDERTAKE INVESTIGATION

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It has to do with the statement made earlier today by the Minister of Finance when he said it is obvious there was no budget leak, referring to the 1980 budget. That is the same Minister who, on February 17, informed the Prime Minister that he had no knowledge of anything to do with the Scotia Synfuels Project prior to September, 1981. We found we could not accept his word in that case. We certainly may not be able to accept his word today when he says it is obvious there was no budget leak.

Because of the sensitivity of this issue and because of the importance of the budget at any time to Parliament and to the economy, will the Prime Minister undertake a full investigation to assure this House and the people of Canada that there was no budget leak in October, 1980?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member goes back to the fact that there had been a correction of dates resulting from the Minister of Finance's letter to me. If the Hon. Member arrived late, I would suggest that she read the statement made by the Hon. Member for Don Valley East before Question Period today. I know that Members opposite usually do not listen to statements from this side, but he cited a specific case where the Hon. Member for Etobicoke Centre, while a Minister in the previous Government, had done the same thing. He had given some wrong information to the House, information amounting to some \$4 million, I think the Hon. Member said, and some days later he came back and corrected it. He said that he had misled the House. There were no howls on this side and no cries on that side for his resignation.

Mr. Clark: There was no violation of the conflict of interest guidelines.

Mr. Trudeau: The Member had merely misled the House. The former Leader of the Opposition seems to think that is not important. I wish he would get together with the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands on that, because she seems to

think it is. And stop smiling a silly smile and look at the reality.

RELEVANCE OF DATES IN OCTOBER, 1980

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Prime Minister who said that his Minister of Finance had merely misled the House previously. This morning he may "merely have misled the House" when he talked about no budget leak in 1980.

Yesterday in response to a question the Prime Minister replied:

The Minister this morning, and certainly the Deputy Prime Minister and myself have all conceded that the dates are irrelevant—

I would suggest to the Prime Minister that two dates are very relevant. One is the date of October 28, 1980, when the budget was brought down. The other is the date of October 29 when the memorandum of understanding between Mr. Gillespie and the consortium was signed. I would ask the Prime Minister once again whether he has the courage and the sense of responsibility to undertake a full investigation to ensure that there was no budget leak or previous information passed with regard to the budget of October, 1980.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, it seems to me that the Minister of Energy answered that yesterday when he put all the dates before the House, all the transactions, all the moments in history when Mr. Gillespie and the four other eventual members of the consortium were trying to put this together on the basis of funds which were available since 1977. Once again, Premier Buchanan was the one whom the consortium members saw first. They did not even come to the federal Government. They went to Nova Scotia because they knew he had control of the funds. They put the thing together with him.

Does anyone suspect that there was a budget leak which was brought to the attention of the Premier of Nova Scotia? Does someone suggest that Premier Buchanan was suddenly enthusiastic about this consortium and said to go ahead and sign it, because somebody had given him a budget leak? That is preposterous. We had funds available since 1977. They were applied for in the years that followed. They came to fruition after long negotiation sometime in the Fall of 1980 on the basis, once again, of funds available since 1977. Why is the Hon. Member trying to contrive some suspicion here when there is none at all?

REQUEST THAT TREASURY BOARD MINUTES BE TABLED

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. One thing journalists in other countries have found out in similar instances is to follow the money. These documents which the Prime Minister gave us are incomplete to do that. I would like to repeat my question to the Prime Minister of yesterday, which he refused or failed to answer. The question was whether he was prepared to table before the House the documents surrounding Treasury Board and the Treasury Board minutes