

Oral Questions

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS DAY

IMPORTANCE OF MUSEUMS

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, today is International Museum Day.

Canadian museums receive more than 20 million visitors every year. These figures show the popularity of these institutions, both for entertainment and for education.

Canadians do not help these keepers of our heritage and culture only with their taxes and admission fees. We must not forget either the 20,000 volunteers who give their time and energy to provide a wide range of activities featuring the wealth of our collections.

[English]

The "friends" of museums help their museums in many ways. They may guide schoolchildren, work in gift shops and libraries, or organize special events.

"Friends" serve on committees and boards. They offer advice, encouragement and enthusiasm which can assist with the daily operation of their organization.

The contribution of Friends to Museums has enriched the lives of all Canadians. I feel strongly that their generosity should be especially recognized today on the occasion of International Museums Day.

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TRANSPORT

ELIMINATION OF VIA RAIL SERVICE

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, the Government's decision to slaughter VIA Rail is shameful. Since 1984, the Tories have been plotting to eliminate rail passenger service in Canada. Atlantic Canadians have been seriously misled by the Government.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), the Minister from Bay Street, has taken his pound of flesh and then some from VIA. No corporation can survive if its budget is slashed by \$1.3 billion over a five-year period. The job losses will be staggering, especially in the Dartmouth-

Halifax region where some 322 people could be thrown out of work if VIA service is withdrawn.

It is shameful that at the same time as these cuts to VIA were finalized, the Tories had the National Transportation Agency, headed by Erik Nielsen, going across the country holding public hearings on the future of VIA. What a game of deceit. What a sham. While the Minister of Finance had VIA drawn and quartered, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Bouchard) said absolutely nothing and the NTA continued to be a willing accomplice in what had become an unholy charade. The Tory Members opposite who vowed to fight for VIA are now muted in silence. I call upon the Government to halt these cut-backs on VIA, protect the jobs of its workers, to keep its word and to do so now.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE BUDGET

QUERY AS TO DATE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE INFORMED AS TO SECOND BUDGET LEAK

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, I put my questions once again to the Deputy Prime Minister.

On Thursday, April 27, at page 1036 of *Hansard*, the Prime Minister of Canada said on the subject of the Budget investigation:

The Solicitor General has said that if any information comes to him, he will report to the House immediately.

Yesterday, the Solicitor General said that the RCMP had been aware of the allegations of a second leak from the outset of the investigation. In other words, for over three weeks.

The Prime Minister told the House of Commons that the Solicitor General would report any information immediately. Why did the Prime Minister not live up to that undertaking to the House? It seems incredible to me that if the RCMP knew, the Solicitor General did not know or would not have reported it to the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance. When did the Prime Minister of this country know, and when did the Minister of Finance know?