

disregarded the real needs of the Canadian economy. We needed that budget at that time. We did not need that kind of harassment and opposition, particularly harassment and opposition that ignored real parliamentary tradition.

Of course, the Minister did change some of the budget figures. He wanted to follow the existing budget standards. Let me quote directly from his speech of April 19, later on in the day, as reported at page 24659 of *Hansard*:

Traditionally a budget leak involves premature disclosure of a tax matter. Fortunately this is not the case. However, in some quarters any matter or fact connected with the budget might be considered to be of this character. To remove any doubt, I have decided to change the portion of the budget which would otherwise have been prematurely in the public domain.

As the Minister indicated very clearly there, there were no disclosures of vital secret matters. There was no early disclosure of information that would have led to undue financial gain by other interested parties in the country.

Let me continue and read another statement from the Minister. Before doing so, let me say that I see the Member for Yukon here. I look forward to hearing his comments in a few minutes. He was the one who urged the Minister to resign. It would be interesting to see if, in his second round of debate, he can produce the odd fact this time rather than simply bluff and nonsense.

The Minister went on to say in his statement, as recorded at page 24659:

There is some irony in all of this. During the past week, I have debated with myself and with my advisors about the precise nature the budget measures should take. My concern has been that in my desire to be fiscally responsible, I would not provide enough stimulus for the economy to secure the recovery and generate employment. Obviously, this is a matter of delicate judgment and there is no absolutely correct answer. Be that as it may, the events of the past 24 hours have led me to follow what my instincts have been urging me to do all along. If I err in this budget, I want to do it on the side of more jobs.

That was the correction. That reason alone was the basis for the correction.

What was the role of the newspaper man? That was an interesting point. I believe the Hon. Member for Saskatoon East (Mr. Ogle) raised some issues that were of great interest to all of us. I am sure that they are equally interesting to people in the media as well as to politicians. I think that the television man was doing his job as he should. As I mentioned, I think he had some extraordinary luck. Let us listen to what Charles Lynch said two or three days after the event. He said:

—it has long been my view that a press photographer or TV cameraman will take a picture of anything newsworthy that shows up in the lens, whether invited to do so or not. My impression is that this is what photo-journalists are paid to do.

● (1600)

I agree with Mr. Lynch. His article continues:

As to whether high-principled print journalists, like myself, would have peeked and printed, my attitude is that we are in the business of disclosure, and leaks are part of it.

I agree with him.

The *Winnipeg Free Press*, in a positive development, moving the issue a little bit further along, wrote this in May of this year:

The Budget

When federal Finance Minister Marc Lalonde allowed a cameraman to film a couple of pages of his budget during one of the "photo opportunities" which governments now stage in place of providing information, Ontario's minister, Frank Miller, tut-tutted along with a lot of others.

Now, Mr. Miller finds himself the victim not so much of a leak as of an inundation. A Toronto *Globe and Mail* reporter has found page after page of his proposed budget sharing a green garbage bag with a banana peel, some used plastic coffee cups and some juice containers.

That is the sort of unsettling experience that leads finance ministers to think gloomily about resignation. It should instead prompt politicians at all levels to think again about how important absolute budget secrecy really is.

A little further in the editorial, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reports:

New secrecy rules which are less obsessively absolute would serve everybody's interests.

One thing is certain: the more politicians try to keep things secret, the more reporters will try to find them out.

I think all of us as politicians would agree that is their habit, and we usually have a secret or an open admiration for those who are most successful at indulging in that habit. Parliamentary tradition, of course, demands that a Minister of Finance should quit if he discloses tax information or financial information that would provide an individual with an undue advantage.

Let me quote what the Toronto *Star* revealed about Eugene Forsey's ideas on this topic. On April 20, 1983, a day after the incident, we read this:

Forsey, Canada's greatest Constitution expert, said the inadvertent leak should not cost Lalonde his job because the documents revealed had nothing to do with taxation.

A little further on we read:

"We hear about deficit projections practically on the hour," Forsey said. "They aren't especially startling."

It is interesting to note that his observation ties in exactly with the observation in the Montreal *Gazette* written by a financial writer about the pre-budget trial balloons that were sent up. The Toronto *Star* column about Forsey went on in this way:

And he added that "it would take a pretty smart cookie" to make a quick killing in the market on the strength of information the government would be spending \$4.6 billion on job-creation provisions.

"If these matters had something to do with taxation, then he would have little choice," Forsey said.

Forsey added it is unlikely Lalonde will be forced to resign.

Tax matters and confidential financial information are the core of the argument here. We have discussed all of this quite widely. The Hon. Member for St. John's West went down the list of Finance Ministers who have been disciplined in various ways over the years. He referred to Hugh Dalton in the United Kingdom in 1947 who resigned because of some premature disclosure of cigarette tax information. As the Hon. Member for St. John's West pointed out, Walter Gordon, the first Finance Minister in the Pearson Government, in 1963 offered his resignation, but it was refused because the then Prime Minister did not feel Mr. Gordon's advisers had had undue advantage or had spread information far and wide.

Donald Fleming, the Minister of Finance in the Diefenbaker Government, offered his resignation when he was the butt of a