

Oral Questions

Mr. Nystrom: When the Government was told about a second leak, the Minister did not rise on a question of privilege. When did the Government find out about the second leak and why did the Minister not rise on a question of privilege at that time and tell us that there had been a second leak?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): What a phoney issue.

Mr. Nystrom: Because when the Government got caught the first time the Minister rose.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, immediately at the time that the investigation was launched there were a whole series of allegations about the number of leaks. As I said, *The Globe and Mail*, April 28, reported that "many leaks were reported to the special RCMP unit".

I have before me, dated April 27, 1989, at 1307 hours, I believe, a story on the CP wire which stated that a public servant said that he had details of a federal budget read to him over the phone Tuesday night and was surprised that it was not leaked to the press sooner. That is what the *Ottawa Citizen* states.

Mr. Lapierre: What an incompetent Government—all these leaks.

Mr. Mazankowski: Then you have the *CJOH* incident. The Member for Hull—Aylmer made a suggestion. All of these allegations were in the public domain and all are being investigated by the RCMP. Why does the Hon. Member want to interfere with that process?

DEFENCE OF MINISTER OF FINANCE—ALLEGED
MISLEADING

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on that excellent question just put to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. Crosbie: Following the NDP.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): When we sat in the House on April 27 and listened to the Minister of Finance defend his question of privilege before the House, he defended his right to proceed with that Budget on the basis that the damage had been contained. There was no advantage given to any people other than the taxpayers generally and we were told that there was a single leak. That was the basis of his defence and that

was his privilege to the House, that the privileges of the House were not offended and he should be able to proceed to the Budget.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Where were you the night before?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Now we learn that at the time he was on his feet the Government and the Minister perhaps knew of other leaks.

Mr. Dick: Perhaps.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Solicitor General has said that the RCMP knew from the outset. The Deputy Prime Minister is defending his case that there were wide known other leaks and yet the Minister of Finance's defence before the House was a single leak. I put my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. Doesn't that tear up the whole basis of the Minister of Finance's speech to the House of Commons and the whole basis of the privilege? Wasn't he misleading the House of Commons knowing at the time there were other leaks before the House?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance took the necessary action and precaution based upon the information he had at that time. He took the necessary steps in trying to bring the Budget before the House at the earliest possible convenience. He rose on a question of privilege and explained it on that basis. The Hon. Member is talking about all sorts of allegations which he implies in a very inaccurate manner and I think as a lawyer and a distinguished parliamentarian, he should refrain from that. I want to tell him that the Minister of Finance stands by his statement.

Mr. Tobin: Eric junior.

ALLEGED WITHHOLDING OF INFORMATION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I put this to another distinguished parliamentarian who should know that ministerial accountability is not to the police but to the House of Commons. That is what we are talking about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!