

TWO STANDARDS QUESTIONED

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. The Minister will realize—

Mr. Andre: Come on, Mr. Speaker, who is in charge here?

Mr. Speaker: I think I should advise the House that at 11 o'clock this morning the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—East Richmond withdrew the remarks he made yesterday.

Mr. Dingwall: Will the Minister of Finance now stand in his place and explain to the people of Canada and to Parliament why two standards: one for everyone else and one for him? Why the two standards?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I was not aware of the comments that were made earlier today by the Hon. Member, and I accept his withdrawal.

With respect to the question, are there two standards, let me repeat that at 11 o'clock we were aware of one piece of information that was in the public domain on Global Television the night before. At 11 o'clock that was the information that I was aware of.

Later on that day, as I have indicated, we became aware of the statements by Mutual Life to my office. But those were a matter for the RCMP to review and investigate. Until those matters are investigated by the RCMP, it is not possible for me to comment, without undermining the investigative process of the RCMP or the possible fair trial, if such a matter does come to a trial. That is the precise reason why we are not able to make those comments.

ALLEGATION THAT TAINTED BUDGET WAS PRESENTED
TO PARLIAMENT

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the Minister received information on Thursday which proved that the Budget was in the hands of an \$11-billion corporate entity one day before it got to Global Television. Since this was known by the Minister, why did he not follow his own rule as set out on April 27 at 11 a.m. and pull the Budget to ensure that no Canadian citizen and no corporation would receive an advantage?

Oral Questions

Why did the Minister of Finance knowingly present to Parliament a tainted Budget?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Budget had been presented to the Canadian public at around 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock the previous evening. It had been the subject of many decisions on the part of people in the private sector throughout the course of that day, throughout the course of Thursday, April 27.

It would have been quite improper, in my judgment, to have withdrawn that Budget because many people, if they had taken decisions based on the Budget, could have been disadvantaged. I believe it would have been quite disruptive and quite improper for us to do so.

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HOUSING

RELEASE OF LANDS FOR HOUSING PURPOSES

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, while one would not know it in the Chamber today, there are millions of Canadians who could not care less about the Budget leak.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): My question is directed to the Minister of State for Housing.

As the Minister knows, there is a housing affordability crisis in many cities of the country. Several months ago the Government announced that it would be releasing lands in the Downsview site. I have not heard very much about the development of those lands.

Would the Minister of State for Housing tell us exactly when we can expect some housing to come on stream?

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, if we asked Canadians what issues should be discussed in the House, we would find that housing would rank much higher than most of the issues discussed here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Redway: Last fall, 135 acres of the Downsview lands were turned over to CMHC to develop affordable housing for Canadians. We are proceeding at the moment. We have appointed a project manager, we are