

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I already answered that question. As Prime Minister, I was informed between 3.30 and 4.00 p.m. In other words, it was after Question Period. I was informed by the Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet, Mr. Paul Tellier, who himself had been informed by Mr. Fred Gorbet, Deputy Minister of Finance. The information was quickly passed on to me by Mr. Tellier, and that is the answer I already gave the Leader of the Opposition.

• (1430)

[*English*]

EXPLANATION SOUGHT FOR 90-MINUTE DELAY IN
INFORMING PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I asked the question because yesterday in the House the Deputy Prime Minister said that to his knowledge no Minister was told prior to Question Period. I want to make sure that no Minister, including the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General, was told during Question Period and, if some Minister was told, we should be informed of that now by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister should also tell us why there was a 90-minute gap between the Masterman phone call and when the Prime Minister of Canada was told. That is highly irresponsible.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered that the Deputy Minister of Finance received the information in a telephone call, I am informed, sometime in the neighbourhood of 1.30 p.m. He immediately conveyed the information to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. As a responsible public servant would do, he sought to convey this to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police through his own security people. He sought verification. He then went immediately to consult and to advise the Clerk of the Privy Council, who having been advised called me when I returned to my office after Question Period.

Ms. Copps: Two hours later.

Mr. Mulroney: I was informed between 3.30 and four o'clock, pursuant to actions taken by the Deputy Minister of Finance and the Clerk of the Privy Council, both of whom acted in a proper and timely manner. I convey that information to my hon. friend as I did to the Leader of the Opposition.

EXPLANATION SOUGHT WHY 90-MINUTE DELAY WAS
NOT MADE SUBJECT OF QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister not find it strange that these senior officials of the Government would not inform the Prime Minister for 90 minutes? Is it not strange that the Minister of Finance was not informed and that the Solicitor General was not informed? Isn't it strange that the Minister of Justice was not informed by the most senior officials in the Government of Canada? And finally, Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister did find out, and after there was a meeting on this issue after 3 o'clock in one of the offices of the Prime Minister, why didn't the Prime Minister come to the House? Or why didn't the Minister of Finance come to the House on a question of privilege, as we were dealing with privilege that afternoon anyway, and tell the House about this very serious leak?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend asks if there was a meeting on this matter after three o'clock and the answer to that is no. My hon. friend asks about coming to the House. I had already the night before instructed the Minister of Finance to make the Budget public, had requested that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police initiate immediately—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: This information was made part and parcel of an ongoing Royal Canadian Mounted Police inquiry that had been initiated the night before. To have impeded that inquiry in any way would have been to render a disservice to the pursuit of justice in that particular inquiry and to the rights of those who may or may not have been charged subsequent thereto.

MUTUAL LIFE BUDGET LEAK—DECISION NOT TO INFORM
HOUSE OF COMMONS QUESTIONED

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. It concerns the second or the so-called Mutual Life Budget leak. The Minister of Finance has admitted to the House of Commons over recent days that on April 27, sometime between three and five o'clock in the afternoon, the so-called Government, in the broad sense, in other words Cabinet, took the decision to hide the second Budget leak from Parliament and from the people of Canada.