

today said that all is well "Don't worry, be happy", in spite of the largest budgetary blunder in Parliamentary history, not only in Canada but in every Parliament of the world. This has never ever happened before.

**Mr. Andre:** Except in Quebec a few years ago.

**Mr. Riis:** Yet the fact that many, maybe hundreds or dozens—who knows—stand to gain privately because of this leaked information which is now confirmed, the Budget is presumably going to be introduced later today, after the fact. This is very, very serious.

A former Minister of Justice for the Conservative Party in 1983, in response to the then Minister of Finance's one item leak which was later changed and introduced in a new Budget, said as recorded in *Hansard* on page 24622 of April 19, 1983.

If—we are to accept the proposition that the Minister either inadvertently or consciously is able outside the House of Commons to present the budget, that acknowledgement alone would render the House of Commons impotent. It would mean there would be no need for us to come here at all. If the Minister could make his budget presentation outside the House, there would be no need for him to present it to Members of the House of Commons.

That is exactly the point. Last night, when the request came for the Minister to present it, it had already been presented publicly outside the House. I suppose, in the usual tradition, what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) perhaps ought to do is to hold a vote in the National Press Gallery in terms of getting their support for this Budget because it makes no sense now to bring it to the House of Commons for presentation and processing.

• (1520)

There are other very serious issues here.

**An Hon. Member:** You had better believe it.

**Mr. Riis:** Earlier the point was made that the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Mulroney) saw fit to ask for a Minister's resignation because that Minister had visited a nightclub in Germany. At that time that was considered to be sufficient reason to ask for that Minister's resignation, and he did. Here we have a leak, a budget leak unprecedented in parliamentary history anywhere in the world. I use the term advisedly because I am quoting from the Minister of Justice and the Government House Leader (Mr. Lewis) whom I respect a great deal, who called it a leak when he called my Leader late last night.

### *Privilege—Mr. Riis*

I want to go on and make some points. The Minister claims that his privileges have been breached by a criminal act. Whether or not a criminal act has occurred will eventually be determined. The point that we are making today is that the Minister has essentially acted in contempt of Parliament, that the privileges of every single Member of this House have been breached. Every single Member of this House represents the people of Canada. They give us their trust, they provide us with the responsibility, if you like, of collecting and disbursing taxes and criticizing that process.

Our rights have been, if you like, eliminated. Our rights and privileges as Members of Parliament have obviously been breached because this Government decided that the appropriate place to introduce the Budget after the leak had occurred was in the National Press theatre.

**Mr. Clark (Yellowhead):** We thought it appropriate here, you would not come to the House of Commons.

**Mr. Riis:** The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) indicates that he did not want this to happen as it did. I remember in 1983 the present Secretary of State for External Affairs standing up in this House and going on for almost an hour—

**Mr. Clark (Yellowhead):** That is when you tried to join my Party.

**Mr. Riis:** —about the importance of any type of leak whatsoever resulting in the automatic resignation of the Minister of Finance. He went on and on for page after page in *Hansard*. It is all here in *Hansard*. It did not matter how the leak occurred, where it occurred, who leaked the information, the fact was that it did occur and the present Secretary of State for External Affairs made the point that it was the Minister who was ultimately responsible. The buck has to stop some place, and with the Minister of Finance it has to stop with him.

**Some Hon. Members:** Right on!

**Mr. Riis:** I would like to say that the most convincing, and I suppose extensive argument in terms of what the proper conduct for the Minister of Finance ought to be, was made by the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Erik Nielsen. Mr. Speaker, I think it is useful to quote it back to the Members.