

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, I would like to put my question again. The Prime Minister and others have referred to the Budget leak as a criminal act, and it may or may not have been a criminal act. But the fact remains that it was possible for someone to have had access to that particular *Budget in Brief*. We know that this may in fact not be a single source leak. So the point is, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister, as the Finance Minister, surely must be ultimately responsible for the secrecy of his Budget. So I put the question to the Finance Minister again. What exactly is his concept of ministerial responsibility and accountability? Does he assume any responsibility whatsoever for the fiasco in which he finds himself?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think it is a very serious question. As Prime Minister responsible for the Ministry, I owe it to my hon. friend to respond. The question goes to the extent and nature of ministerial responsibility. I think I can say in fairness to my hon. friend who has been here for four or five years, that the conduct of the Minister of Finance himself over the four or five years is indeed, I believe, a model of ministerial responsibility. I think that has been the record.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: I suppose that the question that Canadians and parliamentarians will have to ask is, does the concept of ministerial responsibility extend to the limits suggested by Senator Forsey, or does the elastic go all the way to the limits extended by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, where even an individual who perpetrates a criminal offence comes within the purview of the Minister? That is a legitimate question, I think, for consideration.

May I say to my hon. friend that although an RCMP inquiry is going on, I draw the information from the individual who was communicated with, Mr. French of Global who said, and I quote him: "I guess the criminal likes to return to the scene of the crime". It was the individual who received the information, who then made it public, who used the term "criminal".

The question to be answered is, did the Minister of Finance conduct himself in full keeping with the demanding traditions of British parliamentary democracy, and the answer is yes.

Oral Questions

THE BUDGET

QUERY RESPECTING BENEFIT FROM INSIDE INFORMATION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): My question is the Minister of Finance whom we in this House have known for a long time as a man who realizes his responsibilities and his obligations to the people of this country. I want to say with respect, Mr. Speaker, that he did not answer the question of my Leader as to whether or not anybody had benefited from inside information. I want to ask him very clearly and slowly, and for him to answer categorically, if he can assure the House that no one has used inside information from this Budget for personal gain?

• (1440)

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have no evidence of that at all. If the Hon. Member has any evidence of the fact, then surely he owes it to the House and to the people of Canada to report that to the RCMP.

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THE BUDGET

INVESTIGATION OF TRADING BY SECURITIES COMMISSIONS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, the Minister said he has no evidence, and he cannot give us any assurance. Would the Minister respond positively to the following question that was put by Sinclair Stevens on April 19, 1983, during the Marc Lalonde affair, as reported at page 24628 of *Hansard*:

Finally, has he—

The Minister—

—taken steps to ensure that securities commissions in every Province in Canada will be immediately asked to investigate what trading has taken place, particularly in the very volatile bond field, to determine if insider profits have indeed been made?

Has the Minister done that?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, as was pointed out by the Prime Minister and the Hon. Member, as soon as the RCMP was informed of these events early yesterday evening, a thorough investigation of the allegations was underway, and the securities commissions in the provinces concerned were contacted. I believe an investigation is now underway at the securities commissions of four provinces, because we take this very seriously. When such allegations are made, I believe that either one should provide evidence, before the House or