

Privilege—Mr. Milliken

Mr. Milliken: I will read it slowly. It states: "Whenever the House stands adjourned." It does not say recessed but adjourned. "If the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Government", not with the Opposition but with the Government. We are not supposed to be involved in that consultation. The responsibility rests four-square on that side of the House. Their job is to go to the Speaker and ask. They did not even do it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Milliken: That is the rule. It states further: "after consultation with the Government, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time". It does not state on 24 hours' notice. It continues: "the Speaker may give notice", and it does not say notice of 24 hours". It continues: "that being so satisfied the House shall meet, and thereupon the House shall meet to transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time".

Those are the relevant parts of the rule. It is crystal clear.

Mr. McKnight: Read it all.

Mr. Milliken: I do not know what more we need to read, but I will read the rest of it. It states: "In the event of the Speaker being unable to act owing to illness or other cause, the Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Chairman of Committees, or the Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees shall act in the Speaker's stead for the purposes of this section."

I hope I did not read that too fast. However, I do not think that is relevant to the issue that is here. There is no suggestion that Mr. Speaker was not available last night.

I suggest to Hon. Members opposite that they failed to take a look in the rule book. They phoned the Leader of the Opposition. They phoned the Leader of the New Democratic Party. When they found that they could not get their consent, they said: "Well, we will just go to the airwaves and make it public in Canada. So what if some Canadians have gone to bed expecting that they will be able to manage their affairs tomorrow morning on the basis of a Budget to be introduced the following evening at 5 p.m., so what about them". They really did not care. Everything went on last night at 10 p.m. The Minister of Finance came in and made a statement last night.

I suggest that the Government knew when it received the information about the leak that it had a problem. In spite of all the protests that we heard today, it knew that the responsibility of the Minister of Finance was to resign at once. The Government knew that its obligation

was to withdraw that Budget, to appoint a new Minister of Finance and to set a new date to bring in a proper Budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Milliken: That is what the precedents indicate. For the edification of Hon. Members opposite I would like to take a look at a few of those precedents. They have referred to a few of them from time to time here today. Hon. Members will recall in 1963 the outrage expressed by some Hon. Members opposite on the occasion of Mr. Gordon's Budget. As Hon. Members will recall he had hired some outside consultants to assist in the preparation of the Budget.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): He had hired them. He, the Minister.

Mr. Milliken: There was never any suggestion of any leaks except from some members of the Opposition. The Hon. George Nowlan who was the chief opposition critic at the time gave a speech on June 19, 1963. I recall he waxed eloquent on the subject of the sins of the Minister of Finance, Mr. Gordon. He went on and on for pages and pages, saying how dreadful it was that these people had been brought in on the budget process. At the end of his speech he moved a motion of non-confidence in the Government. If we ever do get a Budget here, we will undoubtedly be doing the same thing.

The motion reads in part:

This House regrets that the Minister of Finance by failing to maintain the constitutional practice of the essential secrecy of the budget has seriously weakened public confidence;

Those were the words that Mr. Nowlan intoned in his motion. It was supported and seconded by Mr. Diefenbaker. That concept of budget secrecy and its essential importance for our Constitution was unquestioned by Mr. Nowlan. He was a predecessor of my hon. friends opposite. Indeed, his son sits on the opposite side of the House to this day.

There are other quotations. I do not want to put the Minister of Justice in the embarrassing position of reading his earlier quotations.

Mr. Lewis: Go ahead.

Mr. Milliken: I noticed him this morning squirming and saying that he was making an argument that he did not deserve to win. I agree with him. He did not deserve to win it, but not for the same reasons he thinks. The difference was that the Hon. Marc Lalonde had not done anything like this Minister has done. When his Budget was introduced—