

privileged to the content of the budget before it is delivered in the House. There is an amount of trust there that some member of the press will not use the fact that he has had this privileged access, to cause a leak of that document. The whole thing is built on trust.

An Hon. Member: You don't let them out.

Mr. Trudeau: I have heard some members of the press say that they should storm out of the lockup and spill the beans. I think the Opposition and the media generally have to make up their minds. If they do not want any advance knowledge of the budget, even under a privileged situation, I suppose we can achieve that too. But I do not think it would be in the interests of the country or of Parliament because even Members of the Opposition Parties, as the Hon. Member knows, are invited to that lockup so that, when they stand to comment on the budget that night, they will have had some advance knowledge of the budget. It is founded on trust by the Minister of practices which generally have been respected. If in some cases they are not respected, I think the judgment should be on whether the question of respect should be continued or whether the practice should be changed. Once again, I do not think that, on the basis of the incident which happened yesterday, Parliament will be inclined to recommend changes.

Mr. Nielsen: I am glad to hear from that answer that the Prime Minister is backing away from his general accusation that the media, all of them, were acting on mere speculation. The fact of the matter is that if he has viewed that tape, which I am sure he has, he will have seen that a telephoto zoom lense zeroed in on two pages of the budget, one dealing with the deficit and one dealing with conclusions. From a blow-up and freeze of those frames was extracted the fact that there was to be a deficit of \$31.2 billion and a job-creation program costing \$4.6 billion, together with eight other, translated into English, leaks which I put on the record this morning.

BUDGET SPEECH—PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, if the Prime Minister does not concede the fact that that was clearly the budget speech so labelled on the videotape, and so admitted by the Minister, does he not at least concede that those leaks were in that document, however they might want to change it between now and eight o'clock tonight? I think it would be a rather despicable action on the part of the Government should that attempt be made.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I think I answered earlier the twisted logic about what is despicable and not. The Hon. Member asked me earlier if I had seen a copy of the budget speech. Yes, I saw a copy. I think it was the third draft. I saw it just before the weekend. As far as I know, it embodied all decisions taken until then by Cabinet. It was final then. If it had leaked in that

form, I suppose Hon. Members opposite would be complaining about a budget leak, but it so happened that since I read it and talked to the Minister of Finance, he got back to me and he made more changes. He said I have—

• (1450)

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Contrary to the Opposition, this is a living Party. We are thinking all the time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: We all know that on that side it is the Party of the living dead, and we have known that for some time. The Prime Minister seems to be gasping his last. He is treating this as one huge joke. We treat it with a good degree more gravity than he and his braying donkeys behind him.

TIMING OF POSSIBLE CHANGES

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): May I ask the Prime Minister whether the additional changes which we are obviously going to see at eight o'clock tonight were made between the recording of that videotape and now in the House of Commons, and certainly by eight o'clock? We all know that there was a Cabinet meeting this afternoon. No doubt they will try to brazen this out by bringing in changes, altering a decimal point or altering a few pertinent phrases in that budget. Does the Prime Minister really believe that he can get away with that and that that will cure this gross breach of the normal secrecy that surrounds budgets? Does he not agree that he should ask for the resignation of the Minister of Finance who, if he were self-respecting at all, would have submitted that resignation after he discovered his error yesterday?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member is now assuming and presuming that those pages that he reports to have seen will be changed by tonight. I have not said that. They may be changed and they may not be, but it would be interesting to know if we were damned in both cases. If there is a leak and we change them, there is no more leak. Therefore, perhaps we should change them. On the other hand, if we change them, it is a despicable practice because, having permitted the press a peek, we should be bound forever to that text as though it were the laws of the Medes and the Persians.

POSITION OF FINANCE MINISTER

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister concerning a basic matter of trust that ought to be involved in terms of the Government's relationship to the people, and particularly in terms of the relationship of the Minister of Finance to the people of Canada.