

Privilege—Mr. Boudria

Who asked for that resignation? The Conservative Party. It was achieved. The Government made it such that the Minister of Finance had to resign at that time.

The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Valcourt) asked where were the precedents for what we were asking. This case, which was minute compared to the one we have now—every case is minute compared with the one we have now because there has never been a leak of this size—

Mr. Lewis: Your speech is minute compared with everybody else's.

Mr. Boudria: The Minister of Justice, who put a defence this morning such that he has actually almost convicted two of his colleagues, is talking about the contribution of other Members in this debate. I find it particularly ironic, of all Members across the way, given the testimony that was given by the Minister of Justice in the House today, that he would try to diminish the importance of anyone's contribution here.

The Minister of Justice this morning, and some of his colleagues, have spoken of what is known as the Abbott case where a Budget was presented outside the House of Commons. Two things are different.

First of all, it wasn't a Budget. It was a statement on tax reform and not a Budget per se, as I am told.

The second thing, even more importantly, is that there was not a leak in the sense that some Canadians were made aware or were given or had an opportunity to find out the contents of that document prior to others. It was broadcast simultaneously to everyone who cared to listen to it, obviously a tremendous difference. That is the second difference I have brought to your attention.

Thirdly, the Minister of Finance at that time had not made a commitment to the House that he would present that document in the House. That is in contravention of what we heard today again, so you can see that the defence that was put up this morning by the Minister of Justice was a little less than credible in terms of defending the situation that has occurred now.

A series of events have happened since this morning which I think merit being brought to your attention.

Firstly, this morning the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) said it was somehow the fault of the opposition that this Budget had not been presented in Parliament last night.

An Hon. Member: Shame.

Mr. Boudria: In rationalizing this behaviour, which is hardly rational, the Minister said the following about what the Government had tried to do: That they had sought the unanimous consent of all Members of the House by asking the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner). How can the Leader of the Opposition give unanimous consent for everyone in the House? That is a little hard to follow.

I would really like the Minister to explain how the Leader of the Opposition can give consent for me, how he can give consent for the Independent Member from Alberta who sits at the other end of the House, or anyone else.

An Hon. Member: Or Alex Kindy.

Mr. Boudria: Or even some of the Conservative back-benchers of this House who are less than enamoured with the Government across the way, particularly the whips and others in official capacities in the Conservative Party. Need I elaborate?

Obviously, no one can give that unanimous consent. Unanimous consent can only be sought one way. Mr. Speaker knows it well. Unanimous consent has to be sought inside the House by the Speaker.

In order for the Speaker to have asked for that unanimous consent inside the House, there was only one way to do it. The Conservative Government across the way would have had to ask Your Honour to recall the House pursuant to Standing Order 28. Once the House had been recalled, the Speaker could have asked the House, after being recalled, for its unanimous consent to deal with the Budget, or to deal with anything else for that matter.

You cannot ask Members for their unanimous consent unless they are already in the Chamber. That is why the argument of the Government lacks credibility totally.

I still do not know, and of course I cannot ask the question of the Chair, but I am wondering whether the Government ever did go to Mr. Speaker and ask Mr. Speaker to recall Parliament. We don't know that yet, but given that the Government has not volunteered that information, I can only assume one thing: that the answer is no, because if the Government had asked Mr. Speaker for that, they would have obviously indicated that in their statements raised last night.