

Privilege

In April, 1983—and here is one with a close connection—details of the Lalonde Budget were put forward in a photo-op by the Minister himself holding it up. What happened? He came to the Commons the next day with a changed Budget. The Minister did not resign.

Mr. Broadbent: It was changed!

Mr. Lewis: In May, 1983, a reporter found some Ontario Government Budget papers in a garbage can outside a printing company before Budget day. The information became public. The Provincial Treasurer, Frank Miller, did not resign.

Mr. Riis: Where is he now?

Mr. Lewis: In May, 1987, the Québec Finance Minister faced a similar situation in which some details of his impending Budget were leaked to the press. The Minister immediately tabled the Budget a week ahead of schedule. He did not resign.

Mr. Lapierre: He offered his resignation first.

Mr. Lewis: Here is the Abbot example for the Liberal Party side of things. Mr. Abbot said this: "I announced some two or three weeks in advance of Parliament being in session, although it had been announced that Parliament was called, that it was the Government's intention and my intention when Parliament was convened to ask Parliament to enact these particular taxes effective from November 17. The conclusion that I arrived at and the Government arrived at after a great deal of consideration was that the circumstances were so exceptional, the emergency was so great that action should be taken".

That is another case wherein a Minister announced details on the radio, came to the House and that was his defence. The Minister did not resign.

I wish to talk about co-operation for a minute. The Leader of the New Democratic Party talked about traditions. I would tell him that the respecting of traditions is perhaps a little more highly held by one Bob Rae who has broken ranks with the Leader of the New Democratic Party and said that it was not necessary for Mr. Wilson to resign.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: What does that prove?

Mr. Lewis: Last, I want to deal with the action of Mr. Stanfield in 1968. When the Government of the day, the Liberal Government, lost a vote at third reading on a finance Bill there was great confusion in the realm. What happened? Mr. Pearson went to Mr. Stanfield and

said that he wanted an adjournment of the House in order to regroup and decide what action the Government should take.

Mr. Valcourt: In the best interests of Canada.

Mr. Lewis: Yes, in the best interests of Canada. In the best interests of Canada there was an adjournment. That would have been the parallel to saying: "Look, we come into the House of Commons and sit tonight. You can get your people here and we know that". That would have been a tradition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: The point is that Mr. Stanfield saw a greater sense of value in this place than pure political marks.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kaplan: Then let us have an election on this Budget.

Mr. Lewis: I want to wind up in this manner if I may. I am not here defending the suggestion that the Minister of Finance resign because there is no reason that he should resign. There is no reason for that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: I am defending the traditions of this place and what the responsibility of a Government is when it finds it has a problem on its hands. We could have sat it out. We could have brazened it out. We could have said, no, no, we don't believe what we see on television. We could have waited until five o'clock this afternoon. No, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) convened the meeting I spoke of.

• (1220)

Mr. Lapierre: To ask the Opposition to co-operate.

Mr. Lewis: Once it was proven at seven o'clock, it became no question. How did we go public as soon as possible—

Mr. Lapierre: What did you do before 5.30 and six o'clock?

Mr. Lewis: —in the interest of all the people of Canada? We tried, as we had to, to get the co-operation of the opposition Parties. I make no apology for that. I said to them: "Put partisanship aside. Come in to the House of Commons." It did not work. That is fine. We will be judged by how we conducted ourselves. They will be judged by how they conducted themselves.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!