

Oral Questions

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member states "When the Government became aware of the second leak". I understand that perhaps the Hon. Member was aware of a second leak. If he is aware of a second leak, he should make it very clear.

A May 25 headline states: "Mounties suggest one suspect linked to both Budget leaks". As I said before, and I find it very difficult that the Hon. Member cannot comprehend a very simple answer, he may very well disagree with the course of action that the Government had taken as a result of the revelations on Wednesday, April 26.

• (1440)

Some Hon. Members: Who?

Mr. Mazankowski: The Government made the decision—

Mr. Harvard: Who?

Mr. Mazankowski: The Government made the decision—

Some Hon. Members: Who?

Mr. Mazankowski: The Government made the decision to release the Budget on Wednesday, April 26, and anything that followed thereafter became a matter for the law enforcement agencies. That is a decision that we stood with.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, the reason we are still on the subject in Question Period is that the Government withheld information from Canadians and from the Parliament of Canada. It is not just the opposition Parties who are upset by that. The *Sun* demands the Minister's resignation. The *Winnipeg Free Press* demands the Minister's resignation. The *Citizen* demands the Minister's resignation. The *Gazette* demands the resignation, *La Presse*, *Le Devoir*, *The Toronto Star*—

Mr. Valcourt: Ask the people.

Mr. Tobin: —all demand the Minister's resignation.

CONFIDENCE IN MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): My supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Does he not realize that this is not a partisan issue—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tobin: The people of Canada cannot put trust in a Minister who has lost the right to hold the public trust. Will he resign?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Government did not withhold information. The Government took the only course of action it had available to it.

Ms. Copps: It covered up.

Mr. Mazankowski: As soon as the information about the unauthorized possession of the *Budget in Brief* document was flashed on television, immediately decisions were made to proceed with the introduction of the Budget that evening, and decisions were made on Thursday on the basis of the Budget that was introduced.

Ms. Copps: To cover-up the second leak.

Mr. Mazankowski: There was no cover-up.

Mr. Tobin: The whole country says: "Go, Michael, go". Wake up. Fire the Minister.

Mr. Mazankowski: How could there be a cover-up when all of this information was turned over to the RCMP as part of the investigation that is ongoing right now? If there had been an attempt to cover up, surely the Minister of Finance and others would not have turned this information over to the—

Mr. Tobin: If you had an ounce of shame you would be crawling out of here on your knees.

Mr. Mazankowski: The Hon. Members across can disagree with the decision that was taken—

Mr. Tobin: The whole country disagrees. Wake up.

Mr. Mazankowski: —but I ask them to seriously consider the step-by-step process. If they do, in an objective and rational way, they will agree with the position of the Government as was outlined by the Minister of Finance on Friday.

MINISTER AND PARLIAMENT KEPT IN THE DARK

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. I will ask him about a step-by-step process. He will be aware that he has now had a month to check out all the details. Once the Minister of Finance's office was informed that there was a second leak, at least half an hour transpired. Someone in that office, some official, decided that it was not in the interest of the Minister of Finance to be informed of that, and later, of course, as the previous