

*Oral Questions*

We have asked the corporation to tell the Government what it intends to do with the new referred levels. I repeat what we have always said, that we cannot afford to put more money into VIA Rail. We will try to give the services but within the new referred levels.

## GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan):** Mr. Speaker, there was not much difference in the economy between the time of the election and the Budget. What changed overnight so that in 1988 the Government felt it had enough money in order to enhance the viability of VIA Rail and then turned around and said it did not have the money?

Second, did the Government, not VIA, do any studies whatsoever to determine the level of operating subsidies for VIA Rail, or did it just pick that out of the air?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, the studies which have been done were by the Department of Finance on the capacity of Canada to put money in a corporation that is not used by Canadians.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Where is the Department of Transport?

**Mr. Bouchard (Roberval):** The NDP wants to keep VIA Rail. They do not use VIA Rail.

**An Hon. Member:** There are not enough seats.

**Mr. Bouchard (Roberval):** I am sorry, we on this side of the House do not have the money that you have.

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## THE BUDGET

## POSITION OF STAFF MEMBER

**Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. The saga continues. On May 25, the Hon. Minister of Finance, in response to a question, said:

Mr. Speaker, I made it quite clear that my office knew at 1.30. I found out later in that afternoon.

That was referring to the budget leak. I understand that the questions cause some concern, but they cause concern to a great many more Canadians than just those who sit in the House. That is why they need to be pursued.

On June 5, the Minister of Finance said in response to a question:

When the call came in from Mr. Masterman he went to see the Deputy Minister of Finance, and events moved from there for the further discussion that Mr. Gorbet had with Mr. Masterman and subsequently the RCMP.

The Minister indicated yesterday in his response that it was non-political people who had been involved in this process. My question to the Minister of Finance is fairly direct—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**An Hon. Member:** Let's hear it.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would ask the Hon. Member to put his question.

**Mr. Young (Gloucester):** Mr. Speaker, the question is very difficult to put because the answers have been tough to get.

Is Mr. Richard Rémillard a political appointment on the Minister's staff?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Yes, Mr. Rémillard is a political assistant on my staff.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Gloucester on a short supplementary question.

**Mr. Andre:** Follow his example and keep it short.

**Mr. Young (Gloucester):** The Hon. Minister is pretty short, and a lot of people know that, in a lot of ways.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Sometimes being short is helpful. Please put the question.

## POSITION OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

**Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester):** Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Finance still going to stick to his version of how this matter has unfolded, that he is satisfied that his staff did not advise him from 1.30 when they were made aware of this so-called second leak, that he did not advise the House—

**Mr. Speaker:** The Minister may wish to reply.

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Burin—St. Georges.