

Oral Questions

[Translation]

ANSWER FROM THE MINISTER INSISTED UPON.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice has just acknowledged, perhaps by accident, that he knew more about it than he wanted to admit. I would refer him to *Hansard* of Thursday, April 27, at page 1012, at the bottom of the page, where he said, and this is the Minister speaking:

We were aware of that story on the wire.

Mr. Speaker, if the Minister was aware of the story, why didn't he say so clearly and frankly in the House of Commons at 5.50 p.m. on April 26?

[English]

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, in answer to that question, I have to be a little bit of rhetorical and ask why did the Opposition Party, when they saw it on television, not agree to coming back and opening the House so that we could present the public with it in the House of Commons?

ACCOUNTING OF DELAY REQUESTED—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, within one hour from the call of the President of Mutual Life of Canada to the Office of the Minister of Finance, he claims to have been informed. The Prime Minister, who believed his version, said that it took more than two and one half hours before he was told of a second, more serious leak.

We wonder sometimes who is in charge here. My question is this: Did the Finance Minister or the Prime Minister ever bother asking their public servants, the people who work for them, why the delay? Why were they not told immediately upon receipt of this serious second leak?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have given my hon. friend and Members of the House a full and complete accounting of the time that was involved, the intervention of the Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Gorbet, the intervention of the Clerk of the Council, the advice that was provided to me after Question Period. That is fully on the record.

I have also indicated that I believe on the evidence that the Deputy Minister of Finance and Clerk of the Council acted in a timely and appropriate manner and

given the fact that the inquiry had begun the night before it was entirely consistent with the ongoing and independent process of that inquiry.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): God help this country, Mr. Speaker, if a declaration of war comes upon it.

[Translation]

REQUEST CONCERNING KNOWLEDGE OF SECOND LEAK BY SOLICITOR GENERAL

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, if we are to believe the Government's hypothesis, disclosing any information about the RCMP's investigation would have been tantamount to interfering with or jeopardizing the investigation that was under way.

On May 17, the CBC's English network reported that a company in Toronto had the *Budget in Brief*, and the next day, on May 17, the Solicitor General rose in the House and hastened to give the House the assurance that Norman Inkster, the RCMP Commissioner, had informed him that although the investigation was not yet finished, there was every indication that so far, no one had benefited from the leaks.

Had the Solicitor General also been kept in the dark? Was he aware on May 18, 1989 that there had been a second Budget leak?

[English]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend refers to the question of war. The last time that word was heard there was the invocation of the War Measures Act by the previous Government where 419 people in the Province of Quebec, including journalists, were thrown in jail without trial, without accusation, without benefit of—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, this will interest all Members, including my friend from Winnipeg who just asked a very important question, because on October 16, the Leader of the Opposition, who was the Minister of Justice who authorized the invocation of the War Measures Act, said this when pressed for information as to why. I ask the Members to listen carefully. "It is my hope", said Mr. Turner, "that some day the full details of the intelligence upon which the Government acted can be made public because until that day comes the people of Canada will not be able to fully appraise the course of action that has been taken by the Government". You