

consultations with parliamentarians in general, whether the information is verbal, in writing or photographed or otherwise—it is not official, has no legal status and is not a factor that should be considered, because the question put to the Chair is the following: Was there or was there not a budget leak? However, there is no budget, so there is no leak. It is as simple as that, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Cousineau: As simple as that!

Mr. Pinard: That being said, perhaps I may go back to some of the points that were raised by the Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). When he compares the present case with previous cases—even assuming that the question is not hypothetical, is not premature and even assuming that there is a budget—if we look at the arguments used by my colleagues opposite, there is no comparison at all with the three items of jurisprudence or the three pseudo-precedents to which they referred.

● (1210)

First of all, it is a fact that in Canada, a Federal Minister of Finance has never resigned because of a budget leak. Earlier, some quotes were made, out of context, from the memoirs of the Hon. Walter Gordon, but there was nothing to show—and actual events and official documents will prove this—there was nothing to show and it is not true that Mr. Gordon resigned because of a budget leak. That is not true! The quotes made earlier by the Member for Yukon were taken out of context and given an erroneous and subjective interpretation, which ignored the actual facts. Anyone who knows political history is aware, and the facts are there to prove it, that Mr. Gordon resigned between two budgets, because measures contained in his first budget were changed as a result of the budget debate. The measures were nationalistic in character, and since he had been forced to change the very substance of his budget, he tendered his resignation to the Prime Minister at the time, but there is no information indicating, and that is a fact, that the Minister of Finance at the time resigned because of an alleged budget leak.

So those are the facts, and this precedent does not apply at all to the present case.

With the exception of the case I just mentioned, which is not applicable, a Minister of Finance has never been obliged to resign from the Canadian Government because of a budget leak. The only two precedents mentioned by the Opposition took place in the United Kingdom. The first occurred in 1936 or thereabouts, and the second in 1947, and that was the Dalton case on which the Member for Yukon decided to base his arguments. However, Madam Speaker, the difference between the British precedents which took place in England and the present situation is that in the former cases there was a budget. The basic element was there. A budget existed before the two Ministers resigned. That is not the case here. In the two cases that occurred in 1936 and 1947, the Ministers

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resigned after a budget was brought down because information had been leaked. Here, nothing has been leaked since there is no budget. Second, in the first two cases, the leak was about fiscal measures, which is not the case here, because the information in the photographs mentioned by the Member for Yukon concerned only figures relating to the deficit, which was discussed on the floor of the House during the last few days, and the people of Canada know it will be high. It does not come as a surprise to anyone. But the big difference between the two British cases and the present situation is that fiscal measures were leaked from an existing budget before the Ministers resigned in 1936 and 1947. That is not the case here. No fiscal measure is being alleged to have been disclosed or to be coming from a given document.

Neither is there a case of privileged information at this point, Madam Speaker. Furthermore, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), unlike Mr. Dalton and the other Minister in 1936, did not tell someone: I am proposing such and such a measure in my budget. I feel it is unconscionable that Hon. Members, considering the circumstances which are generally known, should say that the Minister of Finance of Canada deliberately set out to allow a reporter to photograph one or two pages of a document that may have been his Budget. I think that the camera's indiscretion does not at this time warrant, before there even is a budget, demanding the resignation of the Minister of Finance and preventing the Government this evening from creating the jobs Canada needs. Today, all the Opposition is doing is indulging in some more systematic obstruction, because the Bill on the Order Paper, which provides for funding for the Calgary Olympics, has always been opposed by these people, and now they have a golden opportunity to kill time and set up a smoke screen to distract our attention. The public, however, is not easily fooled, Madam Speaker. The public is certainly not about to be fooled. It is all very well to object formally, but when it is a matter of proving its point, the Opposition shows its true colours, and the points it is trying to make simply do not apply in the present context, where we do not even have a budget, since it must first be brought down this evening at eight o'clock. Everyone knows that it will create jobs, and if the Opposition is so irresponsible as to demand the resignation of the Minister of Finance because the camera's indiscretion, without the Minister's knowing, revealed a measure that is not a fiscal measure, before a budget was finalized, I call that absolutely irresponsible, a show of petty politics and a further waste of the time of the House.

Madam Speaker, in addition to my principal line of reasoning which is that there is no budget, that a basic element is lacking, that up to now, nothing has happened to restrain the freedom of speech of the Members of this House, and there is therefore no *prima facie* evidence for a question of privilege in addition to this, I have just shown that even assuming there were a budget, this particular case differs from the only two