

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

WHY DID THE PRIME MINISTER NOT ASK FOR THE
RESIGNATION OF HIS MINISTER OF FINANCE

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, if we consider that many people had access to this information and that there is a possibility of private gain, my question is simply this: Why didn't the Prime Minister ask the Minister of Finance to resign?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the New Democratic Party is making very serious charges against the Minister of Finance. The Minister did try, by entirely lawful means, to have the Budget tabled in the House of Commons last night instead of bringing the Budget directly before the public. However, when the request was made, the Leader of the New Democratic Party refused to give his consent. Now that is a case of total hypocrisy!

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• (1430)

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

SECURITY OATHS SWORN BY PRINTERS

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance just claimed that the security measures which were associated with the printing of this Budget were the same as in the past. I want to ask him to confirm that, unlike the past, during the printing of this Budget of his no secrecy oaths were sworn by those involved in the printing of the Budget. Can he confirm that?

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): I can assure the Hon.—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Dick: I can assure the Hon. Member that every single individual who was in the printing area where the Budget and relative documents were being printed has been cleared to a level of secrecy, secret or top secret level.

An Hon. Member: That's not the question.

Mr. Dick: That is in the same tradition as all other security matters which were identical in all the previous years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRESENCE OF EXTRA SECURITY PERSONNEL DURING PRINTING

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): I think, Mr. Speaker, the House will have noted that the Minister did not answer the question that I asked.

I want him as well to confirm that, unlike the printing of past Budgets, on the occasion of this Budget there were no extra security personnel brought in to be certain that the printers, while they were printing, were not reading the documents that they were printing. Can he confirm that?

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I have already explained to the Hon. Member that all the precautions that have been taken in previous years were applied again this year, and that the 200-odd printers that were involved have all been cleared to a level of secret or top secret.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE BUDGET

MINISTERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Finance Minister. If in fact the Budget leak was the result of a criminal act, then that particular person or persons were aided and abetted by the circumstances which would have allowed the criminal act to take place. Ultimately it is the Minister of Finance who is responsible for the secrecy and confidentiality of his Budget. I would like to put the question to the Minister: Exactly what is his concept of ministerial accountability and responsibility?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me say to the Hon. Member that if there was anybody who was aiding and abetting a criminal act, it was the Leader of the Opposition by not allowing—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Withdraw from the House.

Some Hon. Members: Out, out!

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Minister of Finance, I am sure, realizes that he has gone a little too far, and I would ask him to withdraw his remark.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the comment.