

Oral Questions

attention of any Minister of the Crown prior to the Question Period? To the best of my knowledge, no. May I simply—

An Hon. Member: That is incredible. It really is.

Mr. Mazankowski: That is simply consistent with what we have been saying all along—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): That is incredible.

Mr. Mazankowski: May I simply point out, I—Mr. Speaker, I would like to be as forthcoming as I possibly can. I draw to the attention of the House and to the Hon. Member—Mr. Speaker, if I may be permitted, I want to remind the Hon. Member and other Hon. Members about the issue of *sub-judice*. It is not a matter of trying to hide behind the cloak of *sub-judice*. Section 505 of Beauchesne's Sixth Edition is very clear. It states:

Members are expected to refrain from discussing matters that are before the courts or tribunals which are courts of record. The purpose of this *sub-judice* convention is to protect the parties in a case awaiting or undergoing trial and persons who stand to be affected by the outcome of a judicial inquiry. It is a voluntary restraint imposed by the House upon itself in the interest of justice and fair play.

IDENTITY OF OFFICIALS SOUGHT

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, the following question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Which officials decided to withhold the information from the Ministers of the Cabinet?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, no officials withheld information from the Cabinet.

An Hon. Member: Oh, come on.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I would remind Hon. Members that when the question is put and the Minister rises to answer it, the Minister is entitled to courtesy in order to give the answer. The Hon. Minister.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the decision about the way in which the Budget was going to be handled as a result of the leak that was evident to everybody on Wednesday, April 26, that decision was taken as to how it was going to be handled. Any other leaks suggested, allegations, associated or potential leaks

were matters for the RCMP to investigate. It became a law enforcement matter. Any information that was brought to the attention of any Ministers or officials of the Government were turned over the RCMP, as was the proper and only course of action.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DECISION TO INFORM MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT
QUERIED

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Masterman, who is the President of Mutual Life of Canada, said that he called the Minister of Finance's office shortly after 1.30 p.m. That has already been confirmed in the House by Ministers across the way. What I want to know, in the spirit of openness, is which official or which officials made a decision not to inform Members of the Government from 1.30 in the afternoon until around 3.30 p.m. after Question Period? Come clean with us and tell us, who made that decision and why was it made?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the Hon. Members are suggesting, there was no decision necessary. The action that was defined and taken as of Wednesday, there were no further decisions that needed to be taken. The Budget was presented on Wednesday night, April 26. Any allegations of leaks or associated leaks was a matter for the RCMP to investigate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS BROUGHT INTO QUESTION

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. As a former journalist, I am profoundly discouraged by the events of the past 24 hours—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Harvard: The laying of a charge against a member of the Press Gallery—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Winnipeg—St. James.

Mr. Harvard: Mr. Speaker, the laying of a charge against a member of the Press Gallery for doing his job as he saw fit has serious implications on freedom of the press.