

• (1500)

Who gave him instructions not to inform the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, they were never of course given any such instructions. A suggestion of this kind that involves the integrity of senior public servants is profoundly unworthy of a former Prime Minister of Canada.

EXPLANATION SOUGHT FOR MUTUAL LIFE LEAK NOT BEING DISCLOSED

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this is the reason we want those gentlemen to have their say before the Bar of the House of Commons.

Once the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance knew at 3.30 or four o'clock in the afternoon, as did the Deputy Prime Minister—

Mr. Crawford: Or earlier.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): —or earlier, why did the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance not tell the House of Commons during the course of his presentation to the House of the Budget? Why, and on whose instructions, was the country kept in the dark on this Mutual Life leak for the next 28 days?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have already responded to that question, and the Deputy Prime Minister has responded to it many times.

The evening before there had clearly been an unlawful dissemination of a very important federal document. An inquiry of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was initiated. That inquiry began that very evening. At that point in time, any information thereafter was conveyed by Mr. Gorbet, Mr. Tellier and others to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, as it should be, with a view to allowing this independent group of investigators to conduct their investigations and to lay charges, if those charges were appropriate.

Anything else would have been at variance with our obligation to a complete hands-off policy with regard to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. That is what we have done. That is what this House traditionally has asked Governments to do.

Privilege

PRIVILEGE

COMPLAINT THAT MEMBERS MOCK THE VOICES OF FEMALE MEMBERS

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, during the course of Question Period, and this is not the first time that it has happened, while the Member for Sudbury (Mrs. Marleau) was attempting to ask a legitimate question, the voice of the Member for Sudbury was mocked time and again by Conservative Members on the opposite side of the House.

It is not a low voice; it is not a tenor timbre. It is a woman's voice. I raise this issue because it is not the first time in the House of Commons that women on this side of the House who raise questions are mocked on a consistent basis because they have the voice of women.

I would like to ask the Speaker to review the "Blues" and the comments that were specifically addressed to the voice of the Member for Sudbury, and to advise all Members of the House that the timbre and tone of a person's voice is the product of their physiology, and that we as women in the House are sick and tired of having the Conservative Party mock us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Minister of Justice.

RETRACTION OF REMARKS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, during Question Period the Hon. Member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte (Mr. Tobin), and I know it was in the heat of Question Period, deliberately called the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) a hypocrite. I would simply call on my hon. friend to withdraw.

Mr. Ouellet: Apologize first on what happened. Apologize for your cronies.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, and I advise the Speaker and indeed the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lewis) to check the "Blues", the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) rose in his place and began his response to my question by talking about the hypocrisy of the Member opposite.