

my answer, like the Solicitor General's, was complete. If the Leader of the Opposition desires additional information, I will be pleased to provide it to him.

• (1420)

[English]

APPEARANCE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS BEFORE BAR OF HOUSE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): I say to the Prime Minister: don't play games with the House of Commons and the people of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I say to him: don't play with words and don't hide the truth.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The Right Hon. Leader will put his question.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, for 35 days the Prime Minister and his top Ministers have hidden the truth from the people of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): In his response today he has corroborated what the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have told us, namely, that for two hours the three senior Ministers of the Government did not know.

My question to the Prime Minister is: In those circumstances, since bureaucrats were controlling what the Ministers and the Prime Minister knew about an essential fact, why does he not agree to my motion to call those three senior gentlemen before the bar of the House of Commons so that we can get the facts about why the truth was hidden from the people of Canada.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have all become used to the Leader of the Opposition denigrating members of the cabinet and members of the government, but even for the Leader of the Opposition it is a first for him to try to tarnish the reputations of distinguished public servants. The Leader of the Opposition, as a former Prime Minister, should know better.

The decisions on the night before were taken by the Prime Minister, with his Cabinet colleagues—

Oral Questions

An Hon. Member: What are you afraid of?

An Hon. Member: Not you, that's for sure.

Mr. Mulroney: I am attempting to respond to the Leader of the Opposition.

An Hon. Member: Answer the question.

Mr. Mulroney: On the evening that budget information was made public by a reporter, my first instruction to the Minister of Finance was to ask the Leader of the Opposition for the permission to come before the House.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: In the absence of that, I instructed the Minister of Finance to make the budget measures public immediately. I also requested that a Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigation be undertaken immediately. That undertaking was followed. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigation was ongoing from the night before.

The information that was imparted by the Clerk of the Council to me after Question Period on the following day was very much consistent with that investigation. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police began the night before with their investigation. They followed it carefully and fully, and it resulted in the laying of charges. Anything else would have been to interfere with the independence—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: —of an RCMP investigation and prejudice the rights of the accused, and that we will not do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DIRECTION TO OFFICIALS

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister. It deals with the explanation that the Government has been giving us for its ignorance of the leak for a two-hour period.

The Government wants us to believe that the reason officials did not report the Mutual Life leak to Ministers at once was that the decision had been made the day before to release the Budget to the media, and that all of the rest was immaterial and flowed from that.

In other words, isn't the Prime Minister telling us and wasn't the Deputy Prime Minister telling us the other day that they had given instructions to officials not to