

Mr. Speaker: Because of the matters that took place at the beginning of Question Period, Question Period will take one more question. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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THE BUDGET

APPEARANCE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS BEFORE BAR OF HOUSE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I want to put this question to the Deputy Prime Minister. We have had admitted as a fact that at 1.30 or 1.40 p.m., in the afternoon of April 27, a call was received from the President of Mutual Life Insurance Company. That was a new fact and evidence of a very important leak to a very important financial institution. Now we have it today on the word of the Deputy Prime Minister that, to the best of his knowledge, no Minister knew until later in the afternoon of April 27, that is to say after Question Period.

My question is: which official took it upon himself or herself, on their authority, to keep the Ministers in the dark? Is this an admission from the Deputy Prime Minister that the bureaucracy in this country is deciding when Parliament is to be informed, what information Parliament is to have and if that is so, will he not agree to our motion to call before the House the three senior Deputy Ministers so we will have the facts before the House of Commons?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition purports to be a strong defender of Parliament and the rights and freedoms of individuals. He has not only engaged in the smear and the attempted destruction of the Minister of Finance; he now wants to extend it to public servants. His Member across the way suggested the integrity of the RCMP was being questioned—

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the Day.

Plant Breeders' Rights

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PLANT BREEDERS' RIGHTS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Mazankowski that Bill C-15, an Act respecting plant breeders' rights, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When the House adjourned at two o'clock, the Hon. Member had seven minutes for debate and ten minutes for question and comments. I would love to hear his debate. The Hon. Member for Durham.

Mr. Ross Stevenson (Durham): Mr. Speaker, prior to the break, I was in the midst of discussing three of the many aspects of the major crop beet breeding programs in Canada. I have briefly discussed one aspect, which was the development of new plant breeding techniques. I had stated that it would largely be up to the public sector because most companies, particularly smaller companies, could not afford to carry out that costly basic research. The second area was the maintenance of seed and various forms of genetic material. Again that would have to be maintained by the public sector. The Government of Canada and many of the international foundations involved in crop breeding, are very much aware of that and are committed to playing those two roles.

The third item that I wish to mention in the whole area of crop breeding is the actual task of cranking out the varieties or cultivars. This is to a large degree a repetitive business involving a great many crosses, doing a great deal of testing. The greater the numbers that one can produce, the greater the chances that one has of producing a successful new variety. This is an area where the private sector excels. I am not suggesting that Government should not be in that area. Indeed they have been and will continue to be along with the universities. But clearly it is an area that the private sector has and should be more involved in. Canada to a significant degree has not reaped the benefit of private sector involvement in private crop breeding the way that we should have.