

Oral Questions

Mr. Mulroney: —have concluded differently. For a very interesting reason, unlike the Leader of the Liberal Party and the opposition, Canadians are concerned with the criminal and not with the honourable Minister. Canadians are concerned with a person who stole the property. Hon. Members should be worried about the person who stole the property.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1420)

Mr. Mulroney: There is not a single question that has been asked today about what the RCMP was doing in terms of investigating this, how the Opposition could be helpful to the RCMP—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: —in this important criminal investigation. All the attacks came against the Minister of Finance.

According to experts such as Mr. Forsey and many others, as well as many leading editorialists across the country, the Minister of Finance has fulfilled totally his responsibility as an honourable and respected Minister of Finance. Anybody who holds the Minister to a higher standard is himself doing a disservice to Canada. Canadians know what the Leader of the Opposition is up to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, if there had been proper security for which the Minister is responsible, this would not have happened. That is why this issue is before the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

EXPLANATIONS REQUESTED

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister quotes some authorities, but a budget fiasco of this magnitude is unprecedented in Canada. Can the Prime Minister explain to us why he did not dismiss his Finance Minister? Can he explain to us why he did not cancel or withdraw the Budget? Can the Prime Minister be sure that someone did not profit from the premature release of these documents?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I said and I repeat, the Minister of Finance conducted himself at all times and in all circumstances with integrity and as a responsible Minister of Finance. As for my hon. friend's comments—

[*English*]

—he began by saying that the issue now is proper security. I ask the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, if he wants to be fair, to consider the comments of a reporter by the name of Mr. French of Global Television who was the first person who received the call from the individual who took the documents. Here is the transcript.

Mr. Harvard: How do you know that?

Mr. Mulroney: Let me quote his transcript.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): What does this prove?

Mr. Mulroney: The reporter says with regard to this individual who betrayed the trust: "I guess the criminal likes to return to the scene of the crime". The reporter who received the information qualifies the individual as a criminal who indeed returned to the scene of the crime. The Leader of the Opposition should not be basing his calls for a ministerial resignation on a gentleman who may indeed have been involved in criminal activity.

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[*Translation*]

THE BUDGET

SECURITY MEASURES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, we are faced with a very serious situation involving the Minister of Finance, of course, and the security surrounding such important documents must be very tight. Could the Minister of Finance tell us in this House whether the security surrounding the printing of the Budget was as tight as it was for previous Budgets?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): The security measures taken on this Budget have been the same as with Budgets for many, many years.

[*Translation*]

WERE THE PRINTERS SWORN TO SECRECY

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask another question. I would like to ask the Finance Minister whether the employees who worked on printing the Budget took an oath before they did their job, as in past years?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I take the liberty to answer the question for a reason that will interest the House, because given the Hon. Member's interest, as far as I know, the Hon.