

Oral Questions

believe, came back to me yesterday and told me there was no evidence indeed to this day that people could have profited from that. I think I acted responsibly when I so informed the House yesterday.

[English]

BUDGET SECURITY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is addressed to the Deputy Prime Minister. The Minister of Supply and Services said in the House on April 27 that all precautions had been taken in regard to budget security. On the same day the Prime Minister described the budget leak as a theft and a crime.

Is it not now obvious that the only crime is the criminal negligence of the Government in this whole affair?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat what I said earlier. We have acted quite responsibly from the very beginning. The RCMP are an honourable police force and they have been asked to look into this matter. We have nothing to hide. Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons always takes the same approach whenever a police agency is conducting an investigation: we let them carry out their investigation and do their work. That is what we have to do.

REQUEST AS TO WHEN MINISTER WAS INFORMED OF SECOND LEAK

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. At 11 a.m. on April 27 the Minister of Finance advised the House of Commons that there had been a Budget leak the night before. All he said was a leak. During Question Period the same day at 2 p.m. I asked two questions about the possibility of another Budget leak and the Minister of Finance chose not to respond, suggesting instead that my question was simply a political question. We know now that the same morning the finance deputy minister was told about a second Budget leak. My question is to the point: when did the Minister of

Finance first hear about this second leak and why did he fail to inform the House of Commons at the earliest opportunity?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the New Democratic Party is referring to information provided by or allegations made in the media. I said earlier, as I did yesterday on a number of occasions, that all such allegations or whatever else have been referred to the RCMP. Our duty as Members of Parliament and as Canadian citizens is to refer any such allegations to the RCMP, and that is what we did. I said yesterday and I say again today that the RCMP are looking into all circumstances surrounding this case. That is what I said, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that is the responsible approach.

[English]

OBLIGATION TO INFORM PUBLIC OF FURTHER BUDGET LEAKS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I say that that answer is totally unacceptable. I wish to go back to the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Minister of Finance thought the one leak which had been publicly revealed was so serious that he had to come into the House of Commons the next day to address the question of a leak as a question of privilege. We now know that his Deputy Minister was informed that very morning of another budget leak that had taken place three days previously.

My question to the Deputy Prime Minister is simply this. If the Government had knowledge that day, either that morning or later on in Question Period, that there was not simply one leak but two leaks, why were the people of Canada not informed? Why was the House of Commons not informed? When is the Government going to tell us honestly when it learned of the second leak? That is what is at stake here.

• (1130)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, let us keep this thing in perspective. Even the comment that was made by Mr. Newman of CBC very clearly said that it was not until after Michael Wilson had been forced to go public with the Budget that