

Mr. Lapierre: Of the Government.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): The Opposition has suggested that reference could be made to Rule 28. The Opposition knows that Rule 28 would not have applied in that circumstance because it applies to a recess and not to adjournment.

Mr. Marchi: Says who?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): They also knew that it would take fully 24 hours for the requisite notice to be given. What the Opposition Parties are arguing today when they try to blame their delay on Mr. Speaker is that we should have delayed for another 24 hours the process of making regular a Budget presentation that had been interrupted and set off course by an act of theft. That, Mr. Speaker, is simply unacceptable to us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): We have had some most disingenuous suggestions from the Opposition that there would not be a need to consult with Opposition Parties in order to get agreement in this House. But, Sir, we have been here long enough to know how the House of Commons works.

• (1630)

We have been here long enough to know that if an Opposition wants to raise questions of principle, to raise points of order at 11 o'clock in the morning, it can keep the debate going until 4.30 in the afternoon. We know that can be done. We know that is possible. We also know that the way one gets agreement in this system is to speak to Party leaders. That is what the Government did last night when we were faced with a situation when we had to make regular the situation where part of the Budget had been published. It was in everybody's interest, including in Parliament's interest, that we make that regular by getting the whole document before the House of Commons. We had to find a way to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): It was clear that we needed the co-operation of the opposition Parties. It is clear that that co-operation was necessary. My colleague, the Minister of Justice and Government House Leader, phoned the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the Hon. Member for Oshawa and asked for their co-operation. They quite properly asked for a little time to consider. Then they came back and said that they were not going to co-operate with the attempt of the Government to bring Parliament's Budget into Parliament. That was the position that was taken by the two opposition Parties.

Privilege—Mr. Clark

We sought that agreement. The opposition Parties denied the co-operation that was the only basis upon which the House could have met last night to receive the Budget, the only practical basis on which this House could have met, but the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party denied Parliament the opportunity to receive the Budget. That was not the Speaker's fault. That was a deliberate decision of the two opposition Parties.

Denied the co-operation of the opposition Parties, the Government followed the only course that was open to have the Budget received by Parliament and to have the Budget published officially for Canadians. Copies were sent to officers of the House of Commons. That was the first thing we did.

My colleague for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell suggested that documents were made available to the press before they were made available to Parliament. That is dead wrong. We were careful to ensure that the *Budget Papers* had been delivered to the Clerk of the House of Commons for distribution by the Clerk in the normal way to Members of Parliament before the Minister of Finance went to a press conference to meet the press. Copies were sent to officers of Parliament and a press conference was held.

Results of that theft of the document were very harmful to Canada. They have been very harmful to the country. This is interesting, if Members are interested, because we looked at international markets and there was some concern. There was a drop in the value of the dollar when it appeared that there was political turmoil in the country. That trend reversed. I would like to know if my hon. colleagues will continue to laugh. That trend reversed when the process was made regular and when we were able to present, by the only way open to us, that Budget to the Parliament of Canada.

An Hon. Member: You do not know the difference between a leak and a theft.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Opposition spokesmen know, have claimed and made issue here today that there might have been abuse because of this lapse in time. It was precisely because we wanted to avoid that kind of abuse that we asked for the help of the Opposition. We asked not just in Parliament's interest, not just in the Government's interest, but in the interest of Canada, that the Parliament of Canada, that the opposition Parties in Canada would recognize that there had been an extraordinary situation developed and that there needed to be extraordinary action. We were prepared to go more than half way. The opposition Parties absolutely refused to co-operate. Instead of getting on with the business of the country, they now seek to detain the business of this