

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[English]***THE BUDGET**

CBC TELEVISION REPORT OF INSIDE KNOWLEDGE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister, I put a question or two to the Deputy Prime Minister. The CBC television report that a group of Toronto-based people had the contents of the Budget for two full working days before millions of other Canadian taxpayers, raises serious new questions about the security, the honesty, the fairness and the competence on the part of the Minister of Finance. When the Minister announced his Budget in an emergency press conference, he said that he had to act quickly, and the reason he had to act quickly was to avoid people profiting from inside knowledge of his Budget. Clearly, according to the CBC report, some people had two full clear days

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, this is not a matter for the police. This is a matter for Parliament. I want the Deputy Prime Minister to reply to this question of inside knowledge to profit at the expense of other Canadian taxpayers.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister, and through him the Minister of Finance, still contend that the Government was a victim of sabotage or a victim of a crime? When did the Minister of Finance become aware of the allegations of this second far more serious leak? What comment, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, does the Deputy Prime Minister have about the CBC report?

RCMP INVESTIGATION

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, as you know, there is an investigation by the RCMP into this case. It is a serious matter. I am informed by the Commissioner of the RCMP that the investigation has included, from the outset of the situation, the press story referred to. I am also informed by the commissioner that to date there has been no indication that any profiteering has resulted from advance knowledge of the Budget. The investigation is continuing, and it would be inappropriate for me to comment further on this case.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, this is not a matter for the police. This is a matter for Parliament. I want the Deputy Prime Minister to reply to this question.

INQUIRY AS TO WHEN RCMP REPORT AVAILABLE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Regarding the RCMP report, we have now had three weeks of this investigation. When are we going to get a report? When are we going to get the facts, and how are the RCMP qualified to know whether or not there was any profiteering? We have no facts before this House.

I put further questions to the Deputy Prime Minister and I expect him to answer them as the chief officer of Parliament in the House today. I am serious, and he knows I am serious.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Is this the cause of your life?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): If the security was so tight, if there was no negligence, why has it taken three weeks for this investigation to proceed? Why has it taken three weeks for charges to be laid? Exactly how many copies of this Budget were in circulation in order to give the Government and its friends an advance—

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Shame, shame!

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I think this is a very important matter, and I believe we must look at the facts as they are without pointing an accusing finger. I think the RCMP is an honourable police force, and when I advised the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition that the matter was being investigated and that from the outset, the investigation included the facts that were on the news yesterday. . . The Commissioner informed me, and I think this is important, Mr. Speaker, that so far, there has been no indication that prior knowledge of the Budget provided any benefit or profit whatsoever.