

Oral Questions

Mr. Marchi: If the Government is not willing to give us a new Budget, if it does not wish to give us a new Minister, then let us have the integrity and let the people decide. Let us go to the people.

An Hon. Member: That happened last year.

Mr. Marchi: This Parliament is being hijacked by individuals who believe that the process, the means and the ends are secondary to the interests of Canadians and Canada. Public opinion will be on the side of those who have the strength and leadership to show moral fortitude.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE BUDGET

CALL FOR RESIGNATION OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, there is only one issue at stake in this fiasco of the press conference Budget. The privileged information, possibly worth millions to whoever had access to this information, found its way into the hands of a few. Canadians are asking themselves, who had this information and how many people could have profited from it? We have a story in the press today that a public servant said he had a copy of the Budget on Tuesday. He told some of his friends and those friends may have told others.

Canadians want fairness and expect the trust they bestowed on their Government to be respected. They do not want to be asked to pay an extra \$1,700 a year in new taxes while a privileged few become wealthy from insider trading.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), Canada's Ivan Boesky, has a duty to his shareholders and the people of Canada, and that is to resign. For God's sake go, but go now.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE BUDGET

LEAK OF DOCUMENT—FAILURE OF MINISTER OF FINANCE TO RESIGN

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, by failing to resign, the Minister of Finance

has brought dishonour on himself and discredit to our whole parliamentary system. By failing to demand that resignation of the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister has broken trust with Canadians.

My question is for the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. Did the Minister of Finance offer his resignation? If he did, why did the Prime Minister not accept it? If he did not, why did the Prime Minister not demand it? Why is that man still Minister of Finance of this country?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition's last question I believe is, and I use his words, why is this man still Minister of Finance? Because he is one of the most distinguished and honourable public servants ever in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Did I ask for his resignation, Mr. Speaker? No, I did not. Did he offer his resignation? No, he did not, and if he had offered it, I would have turned it down.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

INQUIRY RESPECTING WITHDRAWAL OF BUDGET

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, that same Minister of Finance is responsible for the biggest parliamentary blunder in Canadian history.

In the circumstances, if the resignation was not offered and a resignation was not asked for nor demanded by the Prime Minister, why didn't the Prime Minister order the immediate withdrawal of the Budget? Did he ask the Minister of Finance, as I now ask the Minister of Finance, whether he can prove that no one profited as a result of those prematurely released Budget documents, however many there were? If not, how can the Minister of Finance credibly go forward with his Budget presentation in this House this afternoon?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my right hon. friend begins his question with some prefatory remarks about what he suggests is the only course of action that the Minister of Finance can follow given these circumstances. He is forgetting that very distinguished Canadians, such as Eugene Forsey and Bob Rae, Leader of the NDP in Ontario—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Are you sure it wasn't Shirley Carr?