

Business Page

Was there really a second leak?



Your Business
Diane Maley
Thomson News Service

The media have a way of confusing things, but it is beginning to look like there was no second budget leak. Why anyone thought there was is a mystery.

From the time we learned that a budget summary ended up in the hands of a salesman for Mutual Life Insurance Co. we have been left with the impression that there was more than one source. We might just as easily have concluded that one person in the government printing office stole copies of the budget summary and passed them around to his friends.

Late last week, Sutherland News Service reported that a day after the original budget leak the RCMP raided the home of a government print-shop worker. The tip came from one of the man's friends, Bob McFarlane, who works for Mutual.

In an affidavit, RCMP Sgt. Ovila Robichaud says he believes the budget summaries came from the printing plant. "To date, two illicit copies of the document have been recovered, one from (Global reporter) Doug Small and one from Mr. Bob McFarlane."

In other words, both so-called leaks may have come from the government printing plant.

WILSON A VICTIM

Despite the evidence that the documents were stolen, the Opposition keeps calling for Finance Minister Michael Wilson to resign. This time, a number of political journalists and editorial writers have joined in the chorus.

What has changed? Even more than before, it looks like Mr. Wilson has been the victim of theft, an act over which he had no control. True, Mr. Wilson appeared tongue-tied in the House of Commons the other day.

The charge is that he should have told the House about the se-

cond leak the day he tabled the budget. But there was no second leak. In Mr. Wilson's mind, someone had stolen budget documents and the RCMP were on his trail. Talking about it would not have helped.

The issue, we tend to forget, was that the contents of the budget be disclosed as quickly as possible. Mr. Wilson did just that. The question of ministerial accountability was - and is - secondary.

Did Mr. Wilson fall short in his responsibility to the Canadian people?

Not at all. Should he have told us that Mutual Life had the budget summary, too? Perhaps.

NO DIFFERENCE

In the larger scheme of things, this information would not have made a great deal of difference to you or me. But Liberal Leader John Turner and New Democratic Party Leader Ed Broadbent would have been delighted.

Mr. Wilson, or perhaps Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, did not want to give the Opposition more ammunition with which to blast the government. They may have been wrong, but that does not mean the finance minister should resign.

No matter what the critics say, Mr. Wilson should not resign his post.

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GO usage up 14 per cent

GO Transit train service in Georgetown has grown almost 14 per cent over the same period last year, with 7,400 trips a day.

The train line, which runs from Union Station to Georgetown makes stops to Brampton, Bramalea, Malton, North Etobicoke, Weston, and Bloor. The cost is almost \$5 a one-way trip for those who wish to avoid traffic chaos and parking problems, says Edmund Shea of GO Transit Information Services in Toronto.

There were 1.65 million trips made last year compared to 1.5 million trips between March 1987 and April 1988. "There's a lot of people using GO Transit to commute to get to work," says Mr. Shea. He said people are moving further and further out of the large urban areas, creating a greater demand for improved train service.

There are eight trains arriving and departing out of Georgetown each weekday - four in the morning, four in the evening.

GO Transit's figure of an almost 14 per cent increase on the Georgetown line reflects an average daily ridership of 7,400 passenger trips in April 1989 compared to 6,500 daily passenger trips in April 1988. Mr. Shea said many of these are return trips.

The Georgetown line does not operate on weekends.

Milton had significantly higher increases than Georgetown over the last year. Milton experienced

an increase in GO transit train use of 29 per cent.

Mr. Shea said this is because Milton, like Georgetown, is an end-of-the-line stop that passes through populated areas. The Milton line goes through the densely populated areas of Mississauga, Meadowvale, Streetsville, Cooksville and Dixie as well as making a stop at Etobicoke.

GO chairman Lou Parsons said in a news release last week that the train company is "proud" of its employees for meeting the "staggering demand" for rail service.

"We're happy with the cooperation we've received from the province and the regions in response to the transit needs of burgeoning populations in the greater Toronto area," he said.

Halton Hills gets a PAL

The Town of Halton Hills, Union Gas, and the Halton Regional Police Force will give extra "eyes and ears" to the police force.

The program, called Operations PAL, for Public Alert, was introduced in Ontario in 1985 but was endorsed by town councillors Monday night.

"We felt that our employees could be the so-called eyes and ears of the police department," said Union Gas representative James McBride. Mr. McBride said Operations PAL was strictly for observing and reporting people in "obvious distress," lost children, suspicious activities, crime in commission and concerns over utilities or municipal facilities.

PAL members have radios that allow them to contact the police quickly through a dispatch station

where PAL members make contact.

The Region of Halton approved Operations PAL in January. Other members who support the program include the City of Burlington and the Town of Milton.

PAL won't cost the town anything.

The town won't need to contribute money to participate in PAL, said Mr. McBride. Union Gas will provide the stickers for PAL vehicles.

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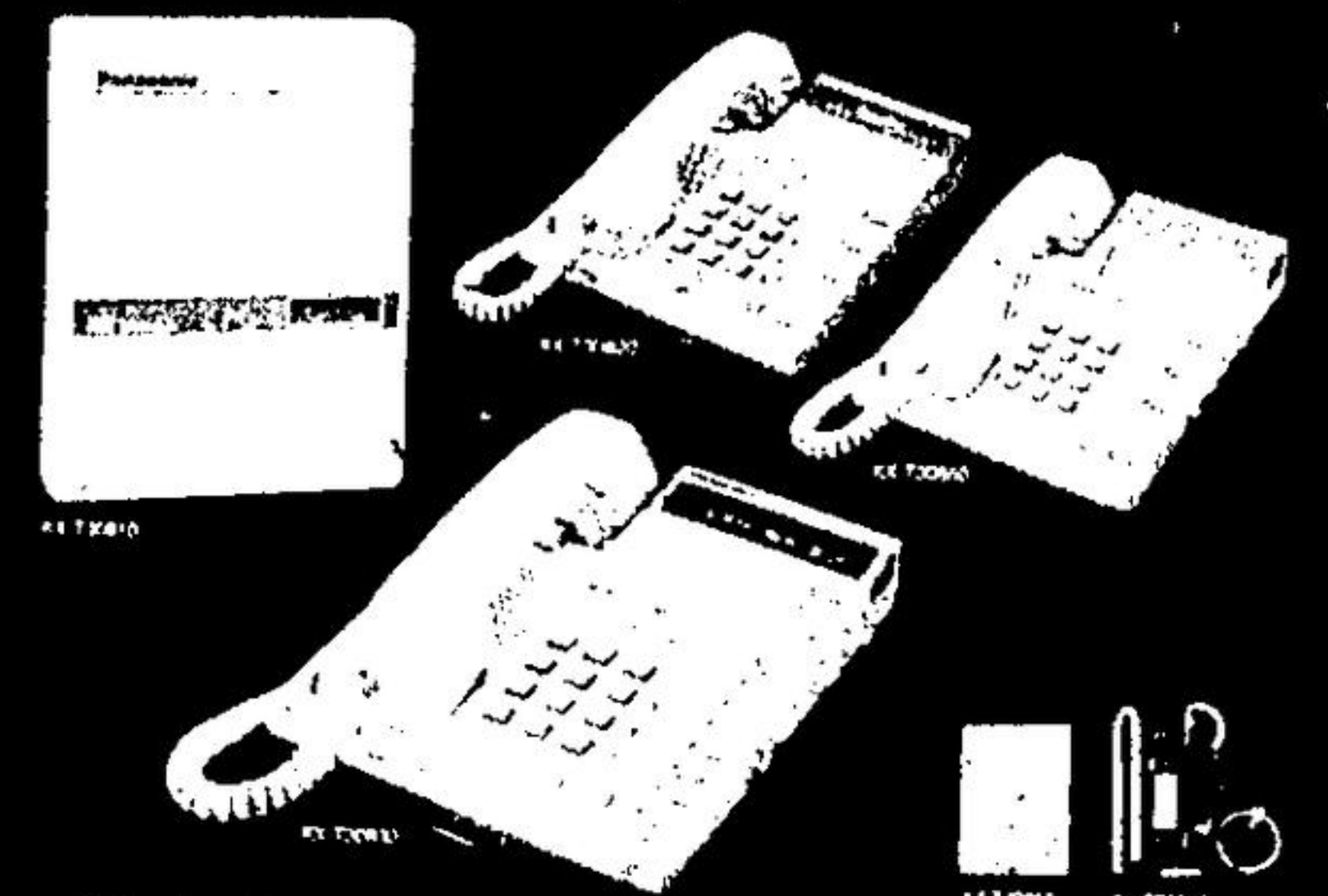
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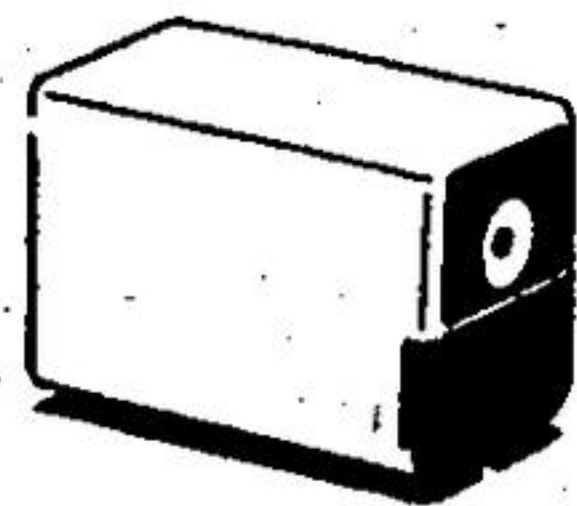
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