

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Fisher: I should like to ask him whether he could tell us in substance what reply he gave to the automobile component manufacturers who, according to reports, have been visiting him recently with regard to their fears that he may be intending to introduce the recommendations of the Bladen report.

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance): I shall dare to reply to the hon. member. I do not think I have seen any manufacturers of automobile component parts who have put that question to me.

REPORTED INTENTION TO INCREASE GOLD
PRODUCTION SUBSIDY

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Paul Martineau (Pontiac-Temis-camingue): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of persistent reports appearing in the press that the government may take steps to increase the production subsidy available to Canadian gold producers, which reports have been spurred by the statement made by his colleague the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys, just a few days ago, would he tell the house whether in fact such a step is now contemplated by the government?

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance): No, Mr. Speaker.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

STATEMENT BY MINISTER RESPECTING
EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Labour whether the statement he made on June 10, as set out in *Hansard* on page 823, is correct. The statement is as follows:

The municipal winter works incentive program can be expected to do a more effective job in creating additional winter employment as a result of the municipal development loan fund which has already been announced.

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): It is not my custom to make statements, Mr. Speaker, which I regard as incorrect.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. MacEwan: Arrogance.

Mr. Starr: Along this same line, Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Minister of Finance and ask him whether his statement is correct as—

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Pickersgill:—I am rising on a point of order.

[Mr. Starr.]

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am rising on a point of order. My point of order is that the question period is for the purpose of asking urgent questions which have arisen since the previous day's proceedings, not for the purpose of engaging in debate or seeking to find out whether certain statements which hon. members regard as controversial are correct or not.

It seems to me that if we are to have debates substituted at this time for the business prescribed by the rules of the house we will never get to the business set for the day. Since this point has been raised, I believe it should be settled now.

Mr. Starr: On that point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: I should like to reply to the first point which was raised, if I may. Hon. members will realize it is difficult for me to decide on the admissibility of a question until I have heard it. On the other hand, the last two questions asked by the hon. member for Ontario do take on the nature of debate, and I do not think it is right to ask such questions at this time.

Mr. Starr: If I may comment on the point of order raised by the Secretary of State, I should like to point out that there is a great deal of urgency about this matter. A program has been announced which is supposed to have an important effect upon our economy and I want to get the facts clear, because in my opinion the statements made by the Minister of Labour and by the Minister of Finance are contradictory. Consequently members of this house and the people of this country cannot appreciate the full significance of what this program means. My question to the Minister of Finance is—

Mr. Pickersgill: On a point of order—

Mr. Starr: My question is whether the statement made—

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt, but I understood the hon. gentleman was arguing a point of order. Now he has reverted to asking a question. However, may I draw the attention of hon. members to Beauchesne, page 148, subsection (t):

It is not permissible to impugn the accuracy of information conveyed to the house by a minister.

Mr. Diefenbaker: On a point of order, there is no question of impugning the accuracy of information. It is a question of trying to ascertain which of two statements, which are contradictory, is the truth.

Mr. Starr: In fairness to members of this house I think this situation should be clarified