

The Canadian Economy

having anticipated that the unemployment statistics would require a debate of this kind. As long as the hon. members have a chance to put their motions we are agreeable.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the statement made by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) is in accordance with the understanding we had at our meeting this morning. We agreed that the House should order a debate for eight o'clock tonight. It was, of course, understood that the members of the opposition parties who had filed notices with Your Honour this morning would nevertheless be permitted to present those motions at this time so the House would know the points that they wished to make.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Hon. members have heard the suggestion made by the President of the Privy Council and the representatives of some of the opposition parties. Is it agreed that we will proceed on this basis?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Hon. Théogène Ricard (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, here is the motion that I intended to move:

There is no more pressing matter to put before the House than the state of national emergency revealed by the official unemployment figures published today, which show that more than 7 per cent of the labour force is out of work in Canada, and indicate a steady trend in the rise of the seasonally adjusted rate of unemployment in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, since the government House Leader has accepted to hold the emergency debate tonight, I will now resume my seat.

[English]

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I am doing what I was told, Mr. Speaker, although the exercise may not be very useful at this time. I ask leave, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), to move the adjournment of the House under Standing Order 26 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, the fact that the actual rate of unemployment in September was the highest since 1960 in that month and the adjusted rate the highest since 1961, the appalling prospect of more critical unemployment levels this winter which urgently require a massive program to create hundreds of thousands of additional jobs, a program which should be announced without further delay since valuable time has already been lost.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The agreement which has been reached by hon. members of course makes it easier for the Chair to make a ruling, or perhaps a non-ruling. I gather there is agreement that there should be a debate on this important matter. This debate will take place at eight o'clock this evening on the basis of the submission made for the consideration of hon. members by the President of the Privy Council.

I am not sure that the hon. member for York South would think it necessary for me to refer at this time to the form of the motion he has presented to the House. As hon. members know, we have established and followed somewhat religiously the procedure and form of motion under

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Standing Order 26, subsection 2 which states that we shall receive from hon. members a written statement of the matter proposed to be discussed, that is, without argument and without debate. I would hope that this requirement, which has been followed so strictly until now, would be followed in future as it has been in the past, and I would invite hon. members to co-operate with the Chair in this respect. It is not easy to determine what is debate, what is argument and what is simply a statement of fact, but it has been helpful to all concerned and for the House until now to limit motions under Standing Order 26 to a very bare statement of the facts.

Mr. Baldwin: So bare it is almost indecent.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASE—SUGGESTED
ESTABLISHMENT OF SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC
FORECASTING UNIT AND IMMEDIATE
FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): In view of the statement which is expected from the Minister of Finance tonight I shall not ask the questions this afternoon that I had intended. However, in view of the obvious discrepancy between the adjusted unemployment figure released today and the forecasts upon which the June budget was based, in all earnestness I should again like to ask the Prime Minister whether he will now support the establishment and assist in the financing of an independent unit responsible for short-term economic forecasting in Canada in order to improve the economic intelligence of the people generally including, not least, that of the government of Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the idea deserves consideration but in this particular instance it does appear that the existing short-term economic forecasting units in the universities have made the same mistakes as we have in their misappreciation of the participation rate of the labour force.

Mr. Stanfield: Without in any way accepting the factuality of what the right hon. gentleman has said—I could not do so—may I suggest to my right hon. friend that this only emphasizes the importance—

An hon. Member: Question.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister not agree that the extent to which other forecasters in the country have been inaccurate only reinforces the request of the Economic Council of Canada that such a short-term forecasting unit be established?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder whether the Leader of the Opposition would not admit that the supplementary as asked is really an argument in support of his original question. I wonder whether in those terms it can be accepted as a supplementary question.