

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 12, 1971

The House met at 11 a.m.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS

[Translation]

TABLING OF PRESS RELEASE ON METHOD OF CORRECTING SEASONAL ADJUSTMENTS IN UNEMPLOYMENT

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, under paragraph (2) of Standing Order 41, I should like to table copies of a press release issued by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and explaining the minor change made in the method of adjusting seasonal variations and showing that this method brings no change in the result obtained regarding the seasonably adjusted unemployment rate of 6.2.

[English]

**Mr. Baldwin:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I take exception to what the minister has attempted to do in that it does not come within the four corners of Standing Order 41(2). I have raised this point previously, Mr. Speaker, and I raise it in all seriousness today because of what happened yesterday and of what is being attempted to be done today. Standing Order 41(1) reads as follows:

Any return, report or other paper required to be laid before the House in accordance with any Act of Parliament... may be deposited with the Clerk of the House on any sitting day—

Standing Order 41(2) goes on to say:

A Minister of the Crown, or a Parliamentary Secretary acting on behalf of a minister, may, in his place in the House, state that he proposes to lay upon the Table of the House, any report or other paper—

If one were to take the words "any paper" in their fullest and broadest sense, a minister could table anything, even a written memorandum which he had sent to somebody else. But I suggest to Your Honour and to the House that when this rule was changed a short time ago it was never thought that it would be prostituted in this way.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baldwin:** Under the principle of *ejusdem generis*, these words should be interpreted in a particular way, and for a minister or a parliamentary secretary to attempt to bring in a self serving, exculpatory, or explanatory press release in this way constitutes, in my

opinion and in the opinion of the members of this party, an infringement of the rights of minorities and an abuse of the rules.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baldwin:** I know that Your Honour is very much aware of this problem, and I would just say one more thing in support of the point I am making. Yesterday the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Lundrigan) attempted to seek unanimous consent of the House to make a motion, and in your response Your Honour said:

I have expressed the thought on earlier occasions that if hon. members were entitled, when moving a motion under Standing Order 43, to make a general statement it would only be equitable—

I stress those words.

—that someone on behalf of the other side should be allowed also to make a statement, and that certainly would be contrary to the spirit of Standing Order 43.

Your Honour does not want there to be a double standard in the House. I do not want a double standard, and hon. members of all parties in the House do not want a double standard. But if, after hon. members have attempted to move motions under Standing Order 43, someone on the government side is to be permitted to make a statement, I suggest even more strongly that when a minister of the Crown attempts to bring in a press release to explain something which happened on a previous day and to try to justify it and apologize for it, members on this side should be entitled to reply.

• (11:10 a.m.)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat difficult to deal with the point of order, and I assume it has been difficult for the house leader on the other side to deal with it because he has not had an opportunity to examine the paper that the minister tabled under Standing Order 41(2). But from the description given by the minister it seems pretty clear that it is a paper dealing with a matter coming within the administrative responsibility of the government.

It is an explanation of the issue that was raised yesterday affecting the Dominion Bureau of Statistics which is under the administrative responsibility of the government.

**An hon. Member:** So are many other things.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Of course, if the statement went beyond an explanation of the statistical methods