

*Point of Order—Mr. Deans*

debate in public terms over the relevance and import of the economic statement of the Minister of Finance.

We know that it has been the practice in the House of Commons for Ministers to be requested to table documents that they have used and cited as relevant and pertinent information for the purpose of influencing decisions or, for that matter, the views of Members of the House and the public. I can recall at least two occasions during the last Parliament when Ministers were asked to table letters which they had indicated were in existence and from which they had drawn certain paragraphs in order to shore up arguments they were attempting to make during the Question Period.

Therefore I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to review what the Minister has done and consider whether it is appropriate for him to use a document provided to him by Ministry officials, which speaks directly to a question being asked of him by Members of the Opposition, in such a way as to influence the debate, without tabling the appropriate document.

In my judgment and I believe that of many Members, I suggest it would be appropriate and correct that the Minister be required to place upon the table the reports that were given to him by the Ministry officials, such reports as were cited by him during his exchange with the Leader of the New Democratic Party, which would answer conclusively the question we have been asking during the last two to three days about the effect of the economic statement on the number of jobs that will be lost in Canada.

The Minister says that he has documents which show that the effect will be minimal, which are almost his exact terms. He said that those are documents provided to him by Ministry officials. He has refused to make those documents and that information available to Members of the House of Commons and therefore to the public of Canada. He is attempting to influence the public view of the appropriateness of the actions being put forward by the Government without being prepared to back it up statistically or with the evidence that is available to him. I simply ask that he be required to table the documents.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, during the course of Question Period the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) did not simply refer to the existence of a document in general terms; he appeared to be citing from it and using words which would appear to any reasonable person to be drawn directly from the document in question. The Minister or the Government House Leader (Mr. Hnatyshyn) may argue that technically Question Period is not a debate in the House, but I submit that this Question Period took place in the middle of one of the most important debates that can take place in any parliamentary session. It is the debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

In addition, I think you are entitled to take judicial notice that there is a debate in the country arising out of the statement given by the Minister of Finance last week. Therefore I submit that what the Minister of Finance did during this Question Period falls squarely within the ambit of the prece-

dents in this regard, that he should be obliged by you to table the document which he cited so specifically before the House so the House of Commons and, more important, the people of Canada will know the truth about exactly how much damage will be done to them as a result of the measures announced in the statement given by the Minister of Finance last week.

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of State (Government House Leader)):** Mr. Speaker, may I say at the outset that this is the first procedural argument that has been brought forward by the Opposition. Let me say that I know all of their tricks. I spent much time in that position trying to bring up points of order which were not legitimate and I congratulate the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) on his attempt, which is clearly defective in terms of being a point of order from a number of points of view.

First, the allegation was made that a specific despatch or state document was quoted from. Indeed, Your Honour will recall that in the course of the debates and indeed in Question Period there have been suggestions or allegations made by the Opposition that econometric models have been used. When the response of the Minister of Finance has been that any advice he received indicated that these models were in fact not germane or relevant to the debate, we now have the Opposition House Leaders coming forward to say that indeed there are documents which were quoted from and specifically cited by the Minister. That is the opposite to the truth.

● (1510)

The Minister, if you recall the debate, Mr. Speaker, responded to a question by the Leader of the New Democratic Party who brought forward not a state document or a despatch but an article from *The Ottawa Citizen* as some sort of authority for his question. The Minister said he did not accept the proposition put forward in the article. The point of order fails on all counts, Mr. Speaker.

I suggest that Beauchesne is quite specific. First, you have to have the Minister quoting or citing from a despatch or state paper. There has never been any reference by the Minister with respect to any document in a direct or quotable way. The Minister said that he had received advice and used political judgment on behalf of the Government with respect to the whole matter. His responses have been consistent. He said on the basis of advice received by him, as Minister, without quoting or citing in any respect, that any information he has received from any document with respect to projections concerning job gains or job losses has not been relevant to his decision.

**Mr. Deans:** He specifically mentioned 1985 and 1986.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** He made reference to information he has received, advice that he has received, in a general way, but he has not quoted from these documents.

**Mr. Deans:** He referred specifically.