

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have to give the same ruling on the further supplementary as I gave on the first. It seems to me that the hon. member's question is much too general to be acceptable. He might follow my suggestion and inquire whether a statement will be made.

Mr. Lundrigan: I can certainly make an inquiry along those lines, but I was wondering whether the minister was going to reintroduce the Newstart program. However, I will ask whether the minister will make a statement on this very urgent matter.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will consider making a statement on the matter.

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—INSTRUCTION OF PRICES AND INCOMES COMMISSION BY GOVERNMENT

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance with respect to earlier questions asked of him. Having in mind that the Prices and Incomes Commission earlier this year accepted from the government the responsibility to instruct the steel industry about steel price increases, how does the minister reconcile his statement now of non-instruction with the earlier action that was requested by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs?

Mr. Speaker: Order. When a member asks a minister to reconcile one statement with another, it is obviously argument and not in order.

PENSIONS

OLD AGE SECURITY—INCREASE BEFORE END OF SESSION

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of statements made by the minister over the weekend, and again in the House this afternoon, expressing the government's sympathy for old age pensioners, may I ask whether the government is now considering an increase in the old age pension before the end of this session?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Not to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would

Inquiries of the Ministry

the minister then indicate how much all this sympathy is worth?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Hees: Thirty-buck Benson.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

APPOINTMENT OF AMBASSADOR TO RUMANIA

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Is the government taking steps to remove the anomaly to which he referred of Canada being unrepresented by an ambassador in Rumania, which is not only an important country but one which has recently suffered serious disasters?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has pointed out, we do not have an ambassador resident in Bucharest. The Rumanian government, however, as an indication of the growing relationship between our two countries, has decided to have an Ambassador resident in Ottawa. I told the Foreign Minister while I was there that as soon as my colleague the Minister of Finance gave me a little more money we will consider doing the same thing in Bucharest.

Mr. Brewin: A supplementary question. Is the delay in sending a representative to this important country due, therefore, to the government's austerity policy?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear from statements that I have made that the government considers it necessary, in order to promote the financial stability of the country, that there be a very close check on expenditures. As a result of the program put into effect last year, we did close some missions and we are not reopening them as rapidly as we would like. I am sure that hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House will respond affirmatively to our virtue in this respect.

PRIORITY OPENING OF EMBASSIES OR TRADE MISSIONS IN FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES

Mr. S. Perry Ryan (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Is priority being given by his department to opening embassies or establishing trade missions in Francophone countries over other countries?