

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I move the motion on behalf of the hon. member for Moose Jaw.

Mr. James Hugh Faulkner (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, the present motion is the same motion for the production of papers as that of previous sessions. As has been pointed out, the study referred to was a confidential report to the Secretary of State and as such is considered to be a privileged document. I would therefore request that the hon. member withdraw his motion.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Question.

Mr. Jerome: Transfer for debate.

Mr. Speaker: Transferred for debate.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

SUPPORT FOR ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS—POSSIBILITY OF HIGHER TAXES AFFECTING INCENTIVE OF MIDDLE-INCOME GROUPS—GOVERNMENT POSITION ON STATEMENT BY HEALTH AND WELFARE MINISTER

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister arising out of comments made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare respecting support for anti-poverty programs having to come from middle-income groups and expressing concern about the possibility of higher taxes damaging the incentives of those who desire to be rich. I ask the Prime Minister whether it is the position of the government that incentives among the middle-income groups are not a matter of concern at the present time?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, of course they are, and I believe that is what the minister was saying.

Mr. Nowlan: Oh, no.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: In view of the startlingly high unemployment figures published recently for the month of May and in view of the concern just expressed by the Prime Minister about the effect of taxation on incentives, is he considering additional measures to reduce the rate of unemployment and thereby directly fight poverty and directly reduce the burden of maintaining anti-poverty programs upon the middle-income groups?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, if we have any announcements to make along those lines further to the ones we made in the budget, we will make them.

Mr. Stanfield: I have one further supplementary, Mr. Speaker, in connection with any information that the Prime Minister might feel free to give. May I ask the right hon. gentleman whether he is considering any additional

[Mr. Skoberg.]

legislation at this time which would reduce the benefits being received by middle-income groups under present legislation, other, of course, than the 3 per cent increase in income taxation which will come into effect on January 1 and presumably affect all income taxpayers?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I hope the Leader of the Opposition will keep these statements in mind the next time he presses for increased benefits for the poor people of the country.

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. As such a high burden of taxation is borne by middle and low-income Canadians now and as the corporate share of the tax burden which was about 45 per cent in 1950 has dropped to about 12.5 per cent under the present government, would the Prime Minister give serious consideration to increasing the share of the burden paid by the corporate sector?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I should not like to concede the premises of the question.

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. Was the Minister of National Health and Welfare expressing government policy when, in his speech yesterday in Quebec City, he said that the government's policy was to save the rich, soak the middle class and seduce the poor in taxation policies?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, as happens invariably with questions from the opposition, they always misstate facts when they are quoting something a minister said outside the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think the Prime Minister has just made a very irresponsible statement.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: I may say, if he wants to take issue—

Mr. Drury: Order!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I am speaking on a point of order and I will be happy to follow your direction. So far as I know, the President of the Treasury Board is not in charge of the conduct of the proceedings of the House.

An hon. Member: Thank God!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1440)

Mr. Stanfield: I simply wish to say on the point of order that if the Prime Minister wishes to take issue with the way in which any minister has been quoted he has a perfect right to do so, but it is going even beyond the