

MOTIONS TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INCREASE IN UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Speaker: Before I recognize the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands, perhaps I should indicate that notice of a motion under Standing Order 26 has been received from the hon. member who is now seeking the floor and also from the hon. member for Spadina. They are on the same subject and I would assume that the same ruling, one way or the other, would apply to both motions. Perhaps the Chair should allow both hon. members to state the substance of their proposal, after which the Chair can give a ruling.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave, seconded by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), 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 present national crisis arising out of the alarming increase in unemployment showing the number of unemployed in December, 1970 as 538,000, the highest in the last decade, an increase of 155,000 over December of the previous year and an increase of 62,000 over the preceding month. Moreover, preliminary surveys show that unemployment for this month will be approximately 100,000 higher than the December figure, thus necessitating an immediate emergency debate so that the government may indicate what steps it intends to take to reduce the human misery involved in this disastrous situation.

Mr. S. Perry Ryan (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I also ask leave to make a motion under Standing Order 26 for the adjournment of the House to discuss a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration.

There can be no matter more important and more urgent for discussion in this House today than the unemployment figures released today by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, when considered in light of the social unrest in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: As I indicated a moment ago, both the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands and the hon. member for Spadina gave the required notice under Standing Order 26. The Chair has given the matter very serious consideration in the meantime.

As the House also knows, motions under Standing Order 26 dealing with the unemployment situation in Canada have been proposed on a number of occasions since the beginning of the current session, usually following publication of Dominion Bureau of Statistics reports. The last such motion was proposed on December 10, 1970, by the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate, and on that occasion the Chair made the following ruling:

The hon. member for Gander-Twillingate has given the required notice of his intention to move the motion to which he has just alluded. As the House knows, similar motions have been proposed from time to time following the publication of DBS monthly reports. The rulings of the Chair have consistently indicated that Standing Order 26 is not applicable in such circumstances.

Inquiries of the Ministry

I should add that since the House still has before it consideration of the budget, including an amendment on the subject of unemployment, I must rule that it would not be in order to initiate a new discussion at this time, under Standing Order 26.

I should think the same ruling would have to be made in the present circumstances. The subject matter of the motions is of the greatest importance; it is one of urgency and of concern to all members of the House. At the same time, because of the continuing nature of the problem it is difficult to see how a debate could take place by virtue of Standing Order 26. It is particularly relevant that there is still before the House, as there was when the motion by the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate was proposed about a month ago, an amendment to the budget motion proposed by the hon. member for Edmonton West which deals specifically with the subject matter of unemployment. The fact that the problem is now before the House and that there will be an opportunity to discuss the subject matter of the motions proposed by the two hon. members leads me to the conclusion that the motions ought not to be put at this time.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I rise on a question of privilege. In view of the fact that your Honour has made a ruling denying an emergency debate on unemployment at the present time on the ground that the budget debate has been adjourned, it would seem to be appropriate to inquire whether the government would be willing to resume the adjourned debate either today or within the next two or three days.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will recognize that this is hardly a question of privilege. It is a valid question and perhaps it might be asked by the hon. member of the House Leader. When we reach the question period in a few minutes I will then recognize the hon. member for that purpose.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

UNEMPLOYMENT—EMERGENCY OR MIDDLE-TERM PROGRAMS TO HALT TREND

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. In light of the unemployment statistics alluded to today, as released by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and the manpower department, showing the critical unemployment situation across Canada, especially among breadwinners whose ranks have swollen by 56,000 in a one-month period, can the Acting Prime Minister indicate whether the government has any new emergency or middle-term programs which will at least halt the direction of the unemployment trend in Canada?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I share, as does the government, the hon. member's concern about the unemployment situation in Canada. As has already been said in the House, the