

agreeing with him as to the gravity of the matter. I am, of course, aware that the Ontario legislature is sitting today in special session on the subject. Nevertheless, I have to enforce the rules consistently. Standing Order 26, under which this application is made, reads in paragraph (5) as follows:

In determining whether a matter should have urgent consideration Mr. Speaker shall have regard to the extent to which it concerns the administrative responsibilities of the government or could come within the scope of ministerial action and he also shall have regard to the probability of the matter being brought before the House within reasonable time by other means.

The subject matter before the House at the present time is, of course, not only the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, which has always been an occasion for the widest latitude in debate, but an amendment which was moved on behalf of the hon. member's party. It is one which relates directly to economic matters, and it would add the words:

—but this House regrets that the incompetence of Her Majesty's ministers has damaged Canada's economy and undermined confidence in it at home and abroad.

The terms of that motion, it seems to me, permit discussion of this subject not only this afternoon, on one day, but in the six remaining days—today, and all of next week. Further, when this amendment is disposed of, presumably on one of the scheduled votes next week, pursuant to Standing Orders, another amendment can be moved by any member of the House; and I would certainly invite hon. members to consider the possibility of doing so if they so desire. Amendments can be directed to any industry or to any aspect of the economy. If it is the intention of any member to bring this subject to the forefront of discussion in the House, he has six days in which to do so: it is open to him to put forward an amendment should he so desire. But even if a specific amendment is not to be put forward, this matter can be discussed, beginning when orders of the day are called within a few minutes.

To the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham and to all members who are interested—I have in mind, for instance, the hon. member for Nickel Belt, whose constituency borders mine and who, I understand, intends to speak today—I say that I am perfectly prepared to give recognition to him in a few minutes, on orders of the day, and to consider carefully, this day and during the forthcoming days of this debate on the Speech from the Throne, recognition on a fair and proportionate basis of any members whose intention it is to concern themselves with this problem and to address themselves to it, and of any government members who are in a position to respond for the government in regard to this crippling blow which has been dealt to Sudbury and to the economy of Canada by the action of the International Nickel Company.

It appears to me that to rule otherwise would be inconsistent with any past ruling on the application of Standing Order 26. But instead of having only one day, we now have six days in which hon. members have my assurance that if they wish to address themselves to this very serious problem, the Chair will see to it that they have the floor at the appropriate time.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): On the point which has been raised, Mr. Speaker, I find that the ruling Your Honour

has made is one which affects my privileges and rights as a member of the House, as it affects those of other non-government members. I call attention to a situation I have noticed for some time, and I regret that the decision should have gone this way.

The debate on the address traditionally gives hon. members generally the opportunity to raise various points. Discussion is not limited, and this affords an opportunity for backbenchers to address themselves to the problems of their constituencies or of the nation. I would point out that already, quite legally, a minibudget has literally been dumped into the throne speech debate. This, in itself, pre-empts a portion of the time available for speeches by backbenchers. Now, as a result of Your Honour's ruling, a further subject has been introduced with an indication that priority will be given to it. In my view, this has the effect of foreclosing comments and speeches and the right of hon. members to speak—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member seeks the floor on what he calls a question of privilege. The hon. member's privileges have not in any visible way been affected by the ruling by the Chair today. If at some time they are, I would think the hon. member would have the opportunity at that time to raise a question of privilege. The Chair has indicated that, in proper proportion to other subjects and to other speakers, it will recognize those who wish to address themselves to the very serious subject which has been raised. Those who are directly concerned with it compose only a small number of members. Other members are interested in the general question as it affects the economy.

It seems to me perfectly reasonable to expect that the Chair ought to be able to accommodate that point of view and to recognize those hon. members during the course of six days of debate, without in any way doing an injustice. But if there is an occasion on which any injustice is done to an hon. member, I will deal with it when it arises.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise simply to indicate that my hon. friend from Nickel Belt does wish to speak on this subject today, and I hope he can be recognized at least among the first three speakers.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[English]

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed, from Thursday, October 20, consideration of the motion of Mr. Dennis Dawson for an address to Her Majesty the Queen in reply to her speech at the opening of the session; and the amendment thereto of Mr. Clark, (p. 30).

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne, deliv-