

Inquiries of the Ministry

Newfoundland service will be partially disallowed. However, the principle to which I object still stands.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Malpeque has given the Chair the notice required under the terms of Standing Order 26 and I have given the matter serious consideration.

As hon. members know, the Chair is bound by the Standing Order to take into consideration not only the importance and urgency of the matter but also the opportunity for debate in the foreseeable future. As hon. members know, in the days ahead there will be many opportunities to discuss matters as important as this one.

The question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Malpeque, that is, the point he made that having given notice of this motion an announcement has come from the office of the Minister of Transport, takes some of the urgency out of the proposal submitted by the hon. member for Malpeque. The hon. member says that he still objects to the principle. I suggest to him and to the House that, if it is the principle that is suggested for discussion, the circumstances to which I have alluded assume special importance in that there will be many occasions in the days ahead to discuss the substance of the motion raised by the hon. member for Malpeque, seconded by the hon. member for St. John's East.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

WELFARE

POSSIBILITY OF PROVINCES OPTING OUT OF CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN AND RECEIVING FISCAL EQUIVALENT

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether the government has agreed to or proposed for consideration the possibility of any province opting out of the Canada Assistance Plan and adopting in lieu thereof a program such as a guaranteed annual income and receiving from the government of Canada the fiscal equivalent of what it would have received had it continued to operate under the Canada Assistance Plan?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. As the question has been asked, especially in the context of fiscal equivalents, there has been no suggestion by the government of Canada to that effect or agreement thereto—no suggestion by us or agreement to any suggestion of that nature.

Mr. Stanfield: Has the government of Canada proposed, or agreed to, a province opting out of the Canada Assistance Plan and receiving any form of alternative fiscal reimbursement?

Mr. Trudeau: No, Mr. Speaker. But as I said in reply to questions yesterday, this matter, like others, is being

[Mr. MacLean.]

discussed and the position of the federal government on these various matters, particularly with regard to shared-cost programs such as the Canada Assistance Plan, has been made known in our papers to former constitutional conferences, and we continue to take that position.

Mr. Stanfield: Has the federal government proposed, in the course of the conference now being held between the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the corresponding provincial ministers, any increase in the contribution of the federal government under the Canada Assistance Plan and, if so, what increase?

Mr. Trudeau: I am being prompted, but I am afraid—

Mr. Bell: Watch it!

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, I will watch it. Thank you very much.

Mr. Bell: Watch the source.

Mr. Hees: Don't get all fuddle-duddle.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I think this is a question of great importance to the members of the House and I would ask the Prime Minister not to be too sensitive but to try to give us an answer.

AIDE-MEMOIRE PRESENTED TO CONFERENCE OF WELFARE MINISTERS

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the Minister of National Health and Welfare presented an aide-memoire or a memorandum to the conference of health ministers which began yesterday, and whether such aide-memoire was a statement of government policy?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the answer to both questions is yes. It has been presented with the authority of the government though we do not know what agreement will flow from it. It has been made quite clear by the minister that any suggestions along the lines of the aide-memoire or along lines that might be of interest to the Leader of the Opposition were conditional upon agreement on the over-all package that we will be discussing in Victoria.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, this matter is of interest to the Leader of the Opposition but it is also of interest to the people of Canada and to all members of the House. Would the Prime Minister undertake to table or to have the Minister of National Health table the aide-memoire and in the meantime inform the House of the proposals that the federal government made to the provincial ministers in relation to sharing under the Canada Assistance Plan, to use its formal name, and would he also inform the House whether the question of a guaranteed annual income will be a federal or provincial matter?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I cannot undertake to table such aide-memoire because agreement was reached between the provinces and the federal government that neither side would make public documents relating to the