

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: I said I did not want to set my judgment up against that of the hon. member for Essex East so as to prevent the minister from replying.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, hon. members opposite apparently do not understand something that the farmers of this country understand well. In view of the total inability of the opposition to understand an agricultural problem, or to interpret the views of the farmers on any agricultural problem, may I say that this is a budget proposal which has been received with warm appreciation by the farmers of this country.

When the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate associates his question on this subject with the character of the government, may I say that the government is prepared to meet this matter precisely on that plane, recognizing that we do try in our approach to public problems to have regard for the importance of the basic interests of agriculture in this country.

My final observation is that if the hon. member is concerned about protection for, as he called it, gutless chicken or as the resolution calls it, eviscerated chicken, not the corrupt version of the word employed by the hon. member for Essex East, who is above the rules of the house and now apparently above the rules of English composition as well, I might say to the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate that on this subject there are times when I think he needs some protection.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, in view of this entirely unwarranted personal attack—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pickersgill: —I feel I should be allowed to say a word in my own defence. I think, sir, that what the minister needs most is some protection for home grown Canadian humour.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the debate continues I am afraid that hon. members should put themselves down as having made one speech already in the budget debate.

[Later:]

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Finance if he is in a position to say whether his budget as presented the day before yesterday is in any way responsible for the rumours that Premier Frost is to retire from public life?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure the minister would like to answer, but actually the retirement of Premier Frost from public life is not a responsibility of the minister.

Mr. Grafftey: It will be a good answer; let us hear it.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): With respect, Mr. Speaker, there was a point about the budget in the question, and I think I should be permitted to say that while these rumours may have no connection whatever with the budget, I believe there is a basis in fact for the rumours that are being circulated to the effect that this budget is likely to result in the retirement of the hon. member for Essex East.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance based on a report in yesterday's *Windsor Star* which reads in part as follows:

W. M. Benidickson (Liberal, Kenora-Rainy River), briefly replying to the Fleming budget speech, referred to the decision to abolish the 7½ per cent excise tax on cars as the "Essex East resolution"—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member appears to be reading from a newspaper article what was said by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River in the debate which is now to be resumed, if I am correct in what I heard.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I was asking a question based on a report of a statement made by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River. I was seeking to ask the minister if he would care to comment, but if he finds it difficult to acknowledge—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member is out of order.

REQUEST FOR TABLING OF ECONOMIC FORECASTS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Trade and Commerce, if I can have his attention, whether he will table for the information of the house the secret economic forecasts made earlier this year on which the budget is based?

Hon. George H. Hees (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, any documents to which the house is entitled are always tabled on time by this government.

Mr. Pickersgill: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, affecting all hon. members of the house, there is a most distinguished precedent for the tabling of these documents