

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

It is unnecessary for the Chair to emphasize the gravity of the situation to which allusion has been made. The Chair is confronted with a very difficult procedural question in deciding whether or not Standing Order 26 provides a suitable vehicle on which to stage a debate of this nature at the present time. This is not to ignore recent developments in that area of the world, but the broad question of the struggle in Viet Nam will be recognized by all hon. members as being one of a continuing nature. In that regard the Chair need only point out that a debate under the provisions of Standing Order 26 was held on May 1, 1970, on the basis of the "widening of the war in southeast Asia" and, in particular, "to seek ways and means of avoiding further escalation of the war and of promoting effective international action to bring peace to the area." Those words were used in support of the motion on that occasion.

Hon. members are aware that there can be only one debate about a given situation in the course of a session under the provisions of subsection 16(d) of Standing Order 26. Hon. members will ask themselves whether, in a developing and changing situation, the point has been reached where the provisions of the Standing Order should be invoked for the purpose of the adjournment of the House. It may well be that hon. members would find it more practical or useful to have such a debate later on.

Because of the uncertainty of the whole situation, it seems that the interests of the House would be better served if the Chair were not to put the motion today. It might well be that hon. members, either by mutual agreement or under the terms of Standing Order 26, might want to have such a debate later on as the situation clarifies. The hon. member for York South or other hon. members may want later on to invoke the provisions of the Standing Order. If that were done, the House may be assured that the motion will be considered very carefully in light of all the circumstances at the time.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****THE CANADIAN ECONOMY****UNEMPLOYMENT GOAL IN LIGHT OF BUDGET FORECAST  
OF REAL RATE OF GROWTH OF GROSS NATIONAL  
PRODUCT**

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance arising out of the budget he presented to the House last evening. Presuming the real rate of growth of the gross national product that the minister is forecasting, according to the Economic Council of Canada we are two or three years away from getting unemployment down to a rate of around 4 per cent. I should like to ask the minister whether the government accepts this as a satisfactory goal in view of the minister's priority of fighting unemployment?

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I did not refer to the Economic Council report at all last night. I said when I first assumed this portfolio that my

[Mr. Speaker.]

goal was a job for every Canadian, and I do not accept any statistical measurement.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, the unemployed exist, whether the minister wants to recognize it or not. I should like to ask the minister whether, in view of the Economic Council's studies and other forecasts made by the University of Toronto forecasting body indicating prolonged unsatisfactory levels of unemployment, which the minister has pledged himself to fight against, he is able to refute these predictions by the Economic Council of Canada by any government forecast relating to unemployment?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I was as specific as I thought I should be and as frank as I thought I should be to the House last night about forecasts and the state of the art of economic statistics. I have nothing further to add to what I said rather fulsomely, I thought, last night.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, I take it from that that the minister does not dispute the forecasts of the Economic Council of Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Question!

**Mr. Stanfield:** In the minister's budgetary statement he also announced his reversal of policy in accepting the principle of an automatic real cost of living escalator in relation to the basic old age pension. I should like to ask the minister why this principle was not extended to cover the real increase in the cost of living since the principle last applied, rather than adopting simply a token gesture of increasing the basic old age pension by the amount of \$2.88 per month?

• (1420)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I will not prevent the Minister of Finance from replying to the question, but I hope we do not get involved in the budget debate during the question period. I think this kind of question, which is relevant and important, could be asked by many members and that would take the whole 40 minutes, but I wonder whether that is the intention of hon. members. This having been said, the minister might reply briefly to the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance whether he can give us some prognosis of the level of unemployment we can expect throughout 1972 or, perhaps more specifically, when we can expect to achieve that glamorous goal of a job for every Canadian that he announced some time ago?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. That, too, sounds like debate. The minister appears to be anxious to reply to these questions, but I suggest we should not have the budget debate before we get to it. If the minister wants to reply to these questions it is not my intention to prevent him from doing so, but I do not think we should get involved in a debate during the question period.