

Statement by Finance Minister

urgency of debate that I wish to put before the house. The first is that last week—this is what makes the matter even more urgent—the Minister of Finance was in the city of Calgary and told the Young Liberal Association that he would have to increase taxes. So he actually announced his mini-budget in Calgary. Second, this announcement was made on motions, and Your Honour has ruled on many occasions that we cannot debate matters on motions. The only way we can debate this matter, as the former prime minister said, is by doing it today, because it is an urgent matter and it is imperative that we debate it now.

I said the same thing yesterday when the government reopened the discussion we had in the house 18 months ago. These are the reasons why this matter is urgent; the highest interest rates in 40 years, no housing, the highest cost of living, loss of markets—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder whether the hon. member is not straying quite a distance from the point. I have the impression that after all the speeches have been made there will be nothing for the Chair to consider because we will then have had a debate.

Mr. Woolliams: I appreciate what Your Honour has said, but I mention these problems to show how urgent the matter really is. The fact that the Minister of Finance rose and debated it shows that he himself believes a debate should take place today.

Hon. L. T. Pennell (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring the attention of the house back to the rules of the house. Citation 100 of Beauchesne states very clearly that urgency does not apply to the matter itself but means urgency of debate, when the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the house do not permit the subject to be debated. Clearly the statement of the Minister of Finance tells us that an opportunity will be provided for debate. The minister's statement said in part "The government has decided to introduce new fiscal measures, including temporary tax increases, later this month."

I am reinforced in that argument by paragraph 8 of citation 100 which says it is not contemplated "that a question of very wide scope, which would demand legislation to deal with it in any effective manner, should be the subject of discussion on a motion for the adjournment of the house" under standing order 26.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the minister has indicated that legislative action will be taken. I wish to state plainly, shortly and simply that the motion moved by the hon. member for Ontario does not come within the ambit of citation 100.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, following the last intervention, I would like also to give my opinion on the urgency of debate.

I think that it would be more urgent to discuss the statement made a few minutes ago by the Minister of Finance and Receiver General (Mr. Sharp) than to pursue the debate on the abolition of the death penalty. Some people are anxious to spare some criminals, but I am convinced that the situation of the consumers, of the Canadian public, is more worthy of immediate attention than that of the criminals.

As for the urgency of the matter, I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether it would not be more urgent for the Prime Minister himself to give his own resignation and that of his cabinet, and to call a general election as soon as possible, so that the matter can be discussed before the whole Canadian people. I think that would be more urgent than anything else.

[English]

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, there are just two points I should like to make in support of our contention that there is urgency of debate on this issue. One of the points I wish to make has been brought to the attention of the house by the statement the Minister of Finance made when he spoke in this debate. I took it, when he said in his statement on motions that there would be discussion among the house leaders as to the time to debate these matters, that this meant that as house leaders we would consider just that, namely the time when there would be a budget debate as provided by the rules of the house.

But the minister said in his second statement that what he had in mind was that the house leaders might discuss whether a debate is necessary at all in view of the fact that we are already in committee of ways and means on the resolutions presented last June. Mr. Speaker, do you see what is being proposed? It is being proposed that the House of Commons, with Mr. Speaker in the chair, may not have a chance at all to debate this set of