

*Inquiries of the Ministry***THE CANADIAN ECONOMY****REQUEST FOR STUDIES ON EXPECTED PROBLEMS THIS WINTER**

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the right hon. Prime Minister, supplementary to earlier questions on the economy. May I ask the Prime Minister whether any special studies have been made regarding the economic problems expected in Canada this winter and, more importantly—Mr. Speaker, let me repeat my question. The Prime Minister cannot hear because of the excitement caused by the recent statement made by the House leader. May I ask the right hon. Prime Minister whether in fact any special studies have been made regarding the economic problems expected to face Canada this winter and, more importantly for the House and the country, whether we can expect any statement or any release of this kind of information to the public and the members of this House?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I missed the final words but I think I got the gist of the question. The question has been asked before. If any announcement is to be made it will be made in the House.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister certainly did not hear my question. Have there been any special studies made into expected economic problems facing the country this winter, and can we expect the release of these studies to the public?

Mr. Trudeau: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lundrigan: I rise on a question of privilege, Your Honour. As recorded at page 7946 of *Hansard* for Friday last, the Acting Prime Minister made a statement to the House which certainly cannot go unchallenged. His statement was in response to the same question I just raised about special studies and the release of this information to the Canadian public. In response to that same question, the Acting Prime Minister said:

—we are making a very special study of the kind of conditions that will prevail this winter. Whether these can be published, or whether it would be in the public interest to publish them, I am not quite sure.

And he continued with his answer. I think somebody has to challenge the two conflicting statements, the one by the Prime Minister today and the one by the Acting Prime Minister on Friday, to see in fact who is telling the truth to the Canadian people—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. As the hon. member well knows, and as I am sure all hon. members do, that is not a question of privilege. Debate as to facts or as to the accuracy of statements cannot be raised by way of a question of privilege, or else I fear we should spend all our time on questions of privilege. I suggest to the hon. member that this is essentially a point of debate rather than a question of privilege.

Mr. Lundrigan: If we cannot get factual statements from the opposite side of the House, we might as well cancel the question period altogether.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have indicated to the hon. member that I thought from a procedural standpoint the

[Mr. MacEachen.]

matter could not be raised by way of a question of privilege. Hon. members know that this is a basic rule. I would think it comes up practically every day. When a question is asked the hon. member asking it may not think the answer is quite accurate, and he might get different information on another occasion. When hon. members think an answer is not entirely factual or cannot be reconciled with a statement made on another occasion, then I suggest to them that is good, fertile ground for debate, but not under the guise of privilege. Orders of the day.

• (3:10 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**INCOME TAX ACT**

The House resumed, from Friday, September 17, consideration of the motion of Mr. Gray (for Mr. Benson) that Bill C-259, to amend the Income Tax Act and to make certain provisions and alterations in the statute law related to or consequent upon the amendments to that act, be read the second time and referred to the committee of the whole, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West) (p. 7763).

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, on Friday last the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) in his remarks recited a litany of the efforts made by the government of Canada over the past number of years in the area of tax reform. He drew to our attention that we first had the Carter Report—the Royal Commission on Taxation in Canada—then the government white paper on taxation, then rather vigorous public discussion, then the referral of the white paper to a committee of the other place and to a House of Commons committee, their reports, more representations from the public, explanations, alterations, and backtracking from the minister, advertising campaigns, letter writing campaigns, and now finally Bill C-259 before us in all the splendor of its 707 pages. No one can accuse the government of not having laboured on the matter of tax reform. They have produced an immense tome and many changes. However, from the point of view of reform as opposed to change, the government's labours have produced a mouse—a mouse in the form of a mountain, let it be said, but a mouse none the less.

It is only proper for me to admit frankly at the outset that some of the changes are beneficial, long overdue and highly welcome. For example, thousands of taxpayers in the lower income brackets, those families earning up to \$3,500 a year, will no longer pay income tax. Old age pensioners, those living on widows' allowances, blind and disabled pensions, veterans who have no other income but their pensions, will benefit. The provision of a deduction of up to \$150 for expenses incurred by a wage earner in the course of equipping himself for his employment represents an advance. Moreover, the implementation of a capital gains tax provides the government with a source of income which removes some of the potential burden of taxation from the shoulders of those who pay taxes on wages and salaries.