

need as determined by criteria established by the federal government in consultation with the provinces.

In the light of what I have said, hon. members will appreciate that I cannot associate myself with these statements. Let me re-emphasize that the general criteria were developed through consultation among federal and provincial officials and were approved by all governments concerned; but their detailed application has remained the responsibility of the participating provincial governments. It is apparent, I think, from what I have said that the administrative problems encountered in putting the new Ontario student awards program into effect can only be resolved by the provincial government. I understand that the minister of education for Ontario has given assurances to students that the program would be reviewed.

Hon. members will be interested to know that another regular meeting of federal-provincial officials dealing with student loans will be held next week. I am sure—

• (3:00 p.m.)

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Sharp:—that there will be a full and frank discussion—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Kamloops has risen on a point of order.

Mr. Fulton: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Normally I am sure there would be agreement that the house give considerable latitude to a minister making a statement on a matter of government policy; but I feel compelled to suggest to you, sir, and ask you to rule, that the Minister of Finance is going very considerably beyond an ordinary statement of government policy and is making a statement which by its very nature must be calculated to arouse controversy. Unfortunately the rules of this house do not permit a debate at this stage. I suggest, therefore, that the minister should not proceed with a statement directly critical—I am not saying whether the criticism is well founded; that may be a matter for debate—of a minister of another government, which should properly be done only in the course of debate and not in a statement on motions which should be confined to government policy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I had concluded my statement.

Student Loans

Mr. Speaker: I suggest to the minister and all hon. members that the point is well taken. I am not suggesting that the speech—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: That was a *lapsus linguae*. I am not suggesting that the statement made by the minister was too long. I have taken the opportunity on a number of occasions previously to bring to the attention of ministers making statements and spokesmen on behalf of opposition parties that their statements were perhaps too long. The rule is clear, and perhaps I should again bring it to the attention of hon. members. Standing order 15 (2a) says:

On motions, as listed in section (2) of this standing order, a minister of the crown may make an announcement or a statement of government policy. Any such announcement or statement should be limited to facts which it is deemed necessary to make known to the house and should not be designed to provoke debate at this stage.

That is the point raised by the hon. member for Kamloops. The standing order continues:

A spokesman for each of the parties in opposition to the government may comment briefly, subject to the same limitation.

We had an instance earlier this week, I believe, when a statement was made by a minister and comments were made by representatives of the four parties in opposition and the whole process took over half an hour. I felt that perhaps we were going beyond the limitations of the standing order to which I have just drawn attention.

The statement and comments must be brief. I realize that "brief" is a relative term and that it is difficult for the Chair to interpret whether statements are too brief or too long. Again I suggest that the point raised by the hon. member for Kamloops is well taken, and I hope that not only ministers but spokesmen for parties in opposition will bear in mind the requirements of this standing order.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I do not think you have fully covered the objection raised. I hear loud noises from the blasting operations being carried out on parliament hill. I have often heard noises like that from the other side of the chamber demonstrating a degree of fear over there, but in this case it cannot be so interpreted. The point of order, in addition to that referred to by Your Honour, lies in the fact that the Minister of Finance endeavoured to use the opportunity, free