

Inquiries of the Ministry

discontinue operation of "Man and His World".

In deciding whether a matter should have urgent consideration, the Speaker must consider the extent to which the matter comes within the administrative responsibilities of the government. The hon. member should read standing order 26(5) about this point.

In my opinion, the motion of the hon. member for Shefford does not meet this requirement since the subject matter as proposed clearly does not come under the administrative jurisdiction of the federal government. I regret, but I must come to the conclusion that this motion may not be allowed in the house.

[English]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE MINISTRY

PUBLIC DEBATE BETWEEN MINISTERS ON GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister arising from the encouragement given by him to public debate between cabinet ministers on defence policy. Is it his intention to encourage public debate between the ministers in his government on other matters of policy still in the process of being determined as, for example, economic policy generally, and particularly the report of the task force on housing that was tabled in the house yesterday?

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have no objection to public debate on the subject of economic progress of the country or the way in which ministers think it could be improved. There is no provision in our government against such debate.

Mr. Stanfield: As a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, may we expect that debate will be encouraged between the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Transport on the removal of the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials, in view of the fact that the recommendation of the task force, of which the Minister of Transport was chairman, is in favour of removal and the indication is that the Minister of Finance is opposed to such action? May we look forward to such a debate?

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Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to make something clear. I am never against the reduction of taxes in Canada. I simply said we cannot afford it at the present time.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): As a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, in line with the Prime Minister's wish to generate debate within the cabinet, within the house and within the country in order to decide what government policy should be, is it the government's plan to adopt the tactic used by the late Mackenzie King of ascertaining which gate the sheep intended to use in order to leave the pasture and then leading them through it?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The rules do not allow the hon. member to encourage debate in the house in this way.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): As a further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, is it the Prime Minister's intention to arrange for Canada to become a two-policy nation?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: Like your two-leader party?

INDIAN AFFAIRS

PROVISION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF CLAIMS COMMISSION

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Some time ago he said he would table the bill to establish an Indian claims commission before the end of this month. Since today is the 30th of January, is he now ready to table it and, if not, can he tell us when he will be ready to do so?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I said I hoped, but, unfortunately, my hope has not been fulfilled yet.

[English]

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, could the minister indicate when his hope may be realized and whether he has met obstacles to presenting the bill in the form of advice as to its constitutionality? If so, can he tell us what he is doing about it?