

Inquiries of the Ministry

now arises from the remarks of the Acting Prime Minister, who mentioned character assassination by innuendo. All I ask the Acting Prime Minister to do is prove that this is innuendo, and prove to this house that there is—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is obvious to me that this certainly is not the House of Commons at its best, but I will hear the hon. member.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, it is pretty hard to have the house at its best when the Prime Minister himself refers to them as bums and idiots, and some of them now refer to themselves as fools. They seem to be taking objection to their Prime Minister's words. These were not my words: It was the Prime Minister who referred to them as bums and idiots.

Mr. Speaker: I suggest the hon. member has made his point. The Minister of Transport has replied and I am wondering whether we are accomplishing anything by proceeding with this matter. I have no objection, because I must sit here, whether it is to hear points of order, questions of privilege or questions during the question period. However it seems to me that hon. members would like to go on to the other business before the house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): On the question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, may I make it quite clear that it was not any member on this side of the house that had the press indicate they had borrowed \$2,000 for video equipment.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

THE BUDGET

POSSIBILITY OF JUNE REPORT TO HOUSE BY MINISTER

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It is based on an interview he had a few days ago with Victor Mackie, whom we all know to be a veteran reporter of high repute. Has the minister now decided to make an economic report to parliament in May or June and if so will it be a budget, a non-budget or something else?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): As I have stated in the house I intend to make a report regardless of whether or not any tax

changes are to be brought forward. There are various definitions of a budget. One definition says it can be simply an economic report, and another says it involves a change in fiscal measures. Nevertheless I have indicated that from time to time, whether it is through a formal budget speech or through other methods—and this could be arranged of course, because budget days are really opposition days—I would bring forward a statement to indicate how well the economy is moving forward and how good the forecasts were that we made last October.

Mr. Baldwin: In spite of the government.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Can the minister give a definite date for this and, particularly, will he make his statement before the boom busts?

Mr. Benson: I do not think the boom, as my friend calls it, is going to bust. I think Canada can look forward to a very good year economically this year. I cannot give the exact date.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. As the minister in his interview with Mr. Clive Baxter of the *Financial Post* indicated the government is considering the imposition of a capital gains tax, has he made any decision on this?

Mr. Benson: I gave exactly the opposite impression, as my hon. friend would see if he would read the article. I simply said the government had not made up its mind in this regard. That is all I said.

FINANCE

TAXATION—SUBMISSIONS TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance. Will he clarify whether, after the introduction of the white paper on taxation, the public will be invited to make submissions to the parliamentary committee and be given the widest possible latitude.

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): It is to be referred to the parliamentary committee. It will be up to the committee to decide whether or not public hearings are held, but I would sincerely hope they would have them.