

the suggested need for an industrial strategy in relation to the creation of jobs and the avoidance of unacceptable unemployment levels.

It may be that the report of the Economic Council raises a new element in relation to the question of unemployment, but it does appear to the Chair that in essence the hon. member proposes that we should entertain a renewed debate on the question of unemployment.

It seems to me that the question of current and future unemployment levels has been the subject of wide debate on numerous occasions in the present session. I need only draw the hon. gentleman's attention to the debate on the subject which took place under special circumstances in the sitting of October 14 last. A like debate also took place on the third and fourth of this month on a supply motion.

It is agreed by all hon. members, I am sure, that the question is a most serious one and is of national and urgent interest, and that the Economic Council's report is of national importance and interest. I am sure the House will have many opportunities to discuss these matters at length in the days and weeks ahead.

For these reasons the Chair does not feel that this motion meets the requirement of urgency of debate under the provisions of Standing Order 26.

• (2:20 p.m.)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

ECONOMIC COUNCIL ANALYSIS OF GROWTH NECESSARY IN NEXT THREE YEARS TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT TO 4 PER CENT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether his government accepts the analysis contained in the report of the Economic Council of Canada published yesterday to the effect that a growth of about 6½ per cent per annum will be necessary in the next three years to reduce unemployment in Canada to approximately 4 per cent? I assume the Prime Minister has not had time to personally study the report in depth, but in view of the importance of this question I also assume the Prime Minister has sought to see whether these forecasts are consistent with those of the government. Does the government accept this analysis and these forecasts made by the Economic Council?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is right in his assumption that I have seen the report but that we have not had a chance to look at it in any great depth. It was only made public yesterday. I believe one of the difficulties with the report is that it sets out goals and aims with which the government agrees but does not indicate in any precise way how they can be simultaneously attained. For instance, on the question of the Leader of the Opposition it would depend a little bit on the degree of inflation the Economic Council is prepared to recommend to go along with this particular objective.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, the question I am interested in at the moment is quite apart from how one achieves this rate of growth or how one avoids an undesirable rate of inflation. Whatever the answers may be with regard to those problems, will the Prime Minister indicate whether or not the government accepts the analysis with regard to the amount of economic growth required in the next three years to reduce unemployment in Canada to approximately 4 per cent? Surely this is something the Prime Minister of Canada has immediately sought an answer for. Does that jibe or conflict? Is it consistent with the prediction of the government itself in its own analysis?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised to hear the Leader of the Opposition say he does not care what happens to the rest of the economy.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Come off it, Pierre.

Mr. Trudeau: That is exactly what the Leader of the Opposition said, Mr. Speaker, and I believe it is an irresponsible position. I cannot answer one thing without the other.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I said no such thing.

Mr. Olson: You said you were not concerned.

Mr. Stanfield: I did not say I was not concerned. Quite apart from the question of how the goals are reached and what measures one takes to offset unnecessary inflation, I asked whether or not the government accepted the prediction, the analysis, of the Economic Council as to the degree of economic growth necessary, and I will not stand here and have my remarks twisted—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: —by a Prime Minister who has to resort to that kind of tactic to avoid answering questions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition might ask a supplementary question.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, in view of the specific predictions and forecasts by the Economic Council of Canada with regard to the economic growth required, I ask the Prime Minister what the government's own goal is with regard to the rate of economic growth over the next year or two? What are the government's own goals specifically in light of these forecasts of the Economic Council of Canada?

Mr. Trudeau: Well, Mr. Speaker, if we could afford like the Leader of the Opposition not to be concerned with the other aspects we would have a better goal than the Economic Council has put before us.