

Inquiries of the Ministry

taken more than 20 minutes if all that my hon. friends were asking for was information.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre wish to speak on the point of order?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I do, Mr. Speaker. A few moments ago Your Honour made it clear to the house that you are aware of citation 295 which begins on page 119 of Beauchesne's third edition. Amongst other things that citation says that questions, oral or written, must not be trivial, vague or meaningless, must not indulge in ridicule and so on. I say that the comment made by the Prime Minister, with all deference to that right hon. gentleman, is a reflection on Your Honour.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The comment made by the Prime Minister implies that Your Honour has been negligent in your duty so far as questions on the orders of the day are concerned. On the contrary, I state that Your Honour has properly stopped questions that have been out of order. On one or two occasions you have stopped me and I have accepted your ruling. On the other hand Your Honour, in a manner that I think is highly commendable, has recognized that questions on the orders of the day play an important part in the affairs of parliament and of the country, and far from the Prime Minister being permitted to say what he said today I think he should be rebuked by Your Honour for his reflection on your conduct as the presiding officer of this house.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I wish also to speak to the point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I think the discussion of the point has proceeded far enough, and I should like to make the brief comment I have to make on it. The question of whether or not any particular intervention during the question period is frivolous should, of course, be raised at the time, and it is not in order now to review or reflect on questions that have been permitted to be asked in the past.

I think it is appropriate at this stage of the day's proceedings to discuss arrangements respecting the business of the house. In that respect I consider that the Prime Minister is entitled to comment on the amount of time that is taken by questions, but not to raise the matter of the propriety of questions that have been asked in the past, only to deal with those that are before the house at the present time.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

SOCIAL SECURITY**REPORTED RAISING OF RENTS OF RECIPIENTS OF OLD AGE PENSIONS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. A. Byrne (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have recognized the hon. member for Huron.

Mr. Cardiff: May I be permitted to revert to motions?

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Has the hon. member leave to revert to motions at this time?

Some hon. Members: No.

An hon. Member: After questions.

Mr. Byrne: Has the Minister of National Health and Welfare received reports and letters from senior citizens' associations indicating that landlords are raising the rents of old age security recipients progressively to take full advantage of the two recent increases in the pension? If so, would the minister consider making use of the facilities and personnel of the dominion bureau of statistics labour force survey to investigate this serious accusation and make their findings known to the appropriate provincial authority?

Hon. J. W. Monteith (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I want to thank the hon. member for his courtesy in giving me notice of his intention to ask this question though in somewhat different form. He asked me today if I had received letters from groups of senior citizens. Frankly I do not recall such, although I have seen reports in the press and so on. In reply I would say, with regard to the dominion bureau of statistics labour force survey being used as he suggests, that I am informed this involves too small a sample to be of much value in substantiating the reports mentioned by the hon. member.

In any case, it seems to me that the accuracy of such reports will become increasingly apparent without any special survey being undertaken. I would suggest that the best way of alleviating this situation, if it exists, would be through public reaction against the practice.

TELEVISION**"VIEWPOINT"—USE OF PRESS GALLERY REPORTERS ON PROGRAM**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. J. McCleave (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I address this question to the Minister of