

debate, not for the purpose of debating the merits of the motion, whether documents should or should not be tabled, but for the purpose of sweeping the idea under the rug and denying the House an opportunity to come to a conclusion on such matters. The government has engaged in this practice ever since the rule was established permitting motions to be transferred for debate on alternate Thursdays.

I think that Your Honour should take cognizance of this practice but should not say, as you have done before, that it is a subject for consideration by the committee that deals with procedure and rules, which meets from time to time. Instead, you should declare that the government is abusing the rules, using this device to prevent debate and, particularly, to prevent the House of Commons from making a decision on the matter.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. On March 27 I raised a question of privilege with respect to notices of motions for the production of papers Nos. 3 to 6 inclusive. The parliamentary secretary indicated that the following week, which was last week, 10 to 15 notices of motions would be called. Last week he was not in a position to call any and this week, even though some notices of motions have been called, Nos. 3 to 6 inclusive were not called. As these notices of motions for the production of papers were on the order paper in the last session and were placed on the order paper months ago, the government has had more than the necessary time to obtain the limited number of documents involved and present them to the House. This is a really scandalous situation. I think my question of privilege is genuine and the parliamentary secretary should apologize to the House for his conduct.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, the point of order raised by the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) is well taken. I apologize to him and to the House. Unfortunately, in my position I do not have power to force ministries to come forth with documents that are required. I have done all within my power to bring these documents forward, and I sincerely apologize to the hon. gentleman.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INCREASE IN CONSUMER PRICE INDEX—INTENTION OF GOVERNMENT RESPECTING INTRODUCTION OF CONTINGENCY PLAN TO DEAL WITH INFLATION

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. In view of the very alarming rate of inflation indicated once more by the increase in the consumer price index, as published by Statistics Canada today, is the government prepared immediately to introduce its contingency plan, to which he has referred frequently, to deal with the rate of inflation as a matter of national emergency?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the rate of inflation is indeed of great concern but the answer to the question is no.

● (1440)

Mr. Stanfield: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I do not want to trespass too much upon the good nature of the right hon. member who obviously hurried to answer the question in such a manner that I could not hear it. Would he be good enough to tell me what he said?

Mr. Trudeau: I will gladly repeat the answer and elaborate on it. I know it is not very often that the Leader of the Opposition is applauded by his own followers—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: —and I think it would only be fair for me to repeat what I said.

Mr. Hees: Back to the old Trudeau.

An hon. Member: Give him a haircut and he thinks he is king.

Mr. Hees: The old, arrogant Trudeau.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the noise which is coming from across the way. The Tories used to be so good at lipreading that I am surprised they did not lipread what I said.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I did not rise to ask the Prime Minister about his popularity, my popularity or about who gets applause. I am asking him whether he is concerned about the Canadian people—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: —and whether, in view of the abject failure of his so-called anti-inflationary policy during the past year, he is prepared to make a statement outlining any fundamental change in the approach of the government before the House adjourns for the Easter recess, if, as and when it does?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, Mr. Speaker. If members opposite look at *Hansard* they will see that my answer which they did not understand indicated precisely that we have great concern for the Canadian people—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: —and that these figures were a source of concern to us. On the second part of the question as to whether I am prepared to make a statement, I certainly am prepared to elaborate on my earlier answer. You know, Mr. Speaker, that sharply rising agricultural and industrial commodity prices have been the main sources of inflationary pressures. There is reason to believe that these pressures may begin to subside given good crops around the world and increased supplies of industrial materials—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!