

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

ALLEGED UNDUE INCREASE IN COST OF LIVING INDEX

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave, seconded by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), to move the adjournment of the house under Standing Order 26, either today or on Monday, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the serious increase in the consumer price index—the cost of living—by one full point during the past month, which is a yearly rate of increase of 10 per cent a year, and is the culmination of the steady rise in the cost of living which has been taking place for the past several years brought about by the failure of the government to take steps to deal with this serious situation.

I bring this motion forward at this time because the time table announced by the government house leader—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member cannot argue the urgency of debate. He must rely on the Chair. I am sure the hon. member appreciates that only one such motion can be granted per day. The Chair has already ruled in favour of the previous motion proposed by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard). However I will not wait until Monday to rule on the hon. member's proposed motion. I would tell him that after much consideration I would have to rule along the lines of the previous decisions made when similar motions were proposed by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees) and, I believe, by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas), when it was indicated that these types of motions based on such circumstances are not normally accepted by the Chair, or by the house.

I refer the hon. member to the ruling which was made by the Chair on May 8 last when the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings proposed a motion under Standing Order 26 in connection with the consumer price index. I suggest to him and to other hon. members that the ruling made at that time would apply in the present situation, and so I regret that the motion of the hon. member should not be put to the house.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, with great deference may I rise on a point of order to remind Your Honour that at that time you ruled there would be an opportunity in the next

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few days to discuss the important matter I brought up, namely, during the debate on the budget, and I accepted your ruling—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member refers to Standing Order 26 he will see it is not possible to argue either before or after the decision or the ruling of the Chair. This is the very purpose of the new Standing Orders, to try to save the house from the difficulties of the interminable arguments we had in previous years as to whether the Chair ought to, or ought not to accept these motions.

● (11:20 a.m.)

The hon. member has made a motion and I assure him I have given the matter much consideration. I might say in passing that the decision reached before was not based entirely on the point he has just raised. If he will read the decision which was made then and on other similar occasions, in particular when the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) sought to adjourn the house in similar circumstances, I would think the hon. member would realize that the ruling which applied then would apply also in the present circumstances.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

GOVERNMENT STEPS TO CURTAIL INCREASING COST OF LIVING

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance, in view of the increase in the cost of living disclosed today and referred to by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings, whether the government has any special plans not yet disclosed to help bring relief immediately to ease the burden and to prevent the burden from increasing, particularly for those who are aged, those who are poor and those who live on fixed incomes.

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Of course, Mr. Speaker, the government is always concerned about the people on fixed incomes, and indeed the policy we have enunciated, which I hope the opposition will support, to fight inflation is the only way to overcome this difficulty. The major cause of the increase in the cost of living in the month of June by .8 per cent was a 12.7 per cent increase in the price of beef.