

Interpretation of Words of Minister

staggering increase in national unemployment and the critical increases in certain regions of this country as revealed in statistics released today.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands has filed the notice brought under Standing Order 26. Since receiving this notice I have given the hon. member's proposal very serious consideration.

It is hardly necessary to remind the House that under the terms of section 5 of Standing Order 26 the Chair is required to have regard to the probability of the matter in question being brought before the House within a reasonable time; in other words, that there be an opportunity for debate within a reasonable time.

I do not think it is possible for me to overlook the fact that we are currently engaged in a budget debate. The wide-ranging discussion which characterizes this debate normally provides an opportunity for discussion by hon. members of problems which are of national concern. Indeed, many of the speeches delivered in the course of the debate which started on Monday of this week have dealt with the continuing problem of unemployment. This continuing debate will, of course, provide the opportunity for debate contemplated by section 5 of Standing Order 26. In the circumstances I would not think the Chair could justifiably put the hon. member's motion to the House at this time.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**PRIVILEGE**

MR. DIEFENBAKER—INTERPRETATION PLACED ON CERTAIN WORDS BY MINISTER OF FINANCE

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege arising out of an observation made last night by the Minister of Finance on a national television network, an interpretation that was false in every particular.

Yesterday I asked for the production of certain figures, as I had over and over again. These figures involved criticisms of the government's white paper on tax reform. The minister wanted to send over to me what he said were coupons. In reply to that observation—and these were my words—I said that I wanted the numbers, and that there should be no specialized count by the government of

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

what it wished to produce in answer to my question. The minister proceeded to interpret my views in a way that indicated—and I am not going to place it on *Hansard*—the level at which most of his thinking is done.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**LABOUR CONDITIONS**

GOVERNMENT ACTION TO COPE WITH INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the latest unemployment figures now indicate a rate exceeding 6 per cent for the nation and as high as 11 per cent for the Atlantic provinces, which I believe are the highest over-all figures in some six years, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether his government is now considering some selective measures to expand employment, as is now being done in the United States?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): The hon. member should know that we have many types of measures to expand employment and to release from the over-all anti-inflationary fight of the government those areas where unemployment is high. The federal government is putting hundreds of millions of dollars through the regional economic expansion programs in precisely those areas which have to be helped.

Mr. Stanfield: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. It is pretty clear that the effects of the negative policies of the government in those areas are far exceeding any benefit from any positive policies. With regard to the country as a whole, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether it is the intention to pursue a policy of increasing unemployment, particularly in view of these figures and in view of the prediction made by the Minister of Finance in his budget that unemployment would increase, by proceeding with the proposed restrictions on consumer credit?

Mr. Trudeau: Is it the intention of the hon. member to stop beating his wife?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.