

Interim Supply

another occasion when we are witnessing a very remarkable somersault.

I should like to make some general remarks to the minister in connection with interest rates, because in the statement he made on February 5 he pointed out that one of the chief items of increase in the estimates for the forthcoming year as compared with the current year was the item of an increase of \$106 million accounted for by the necessity of paying larger amounts in interest on the public debt. It is in this connection that I find, in odd comments made by the minister during the present session, an unwillingness, again, to be frank with the house. I think that many of the minister's statements this session, particularly on the subject of interest rates, have been unduly fatuous and, indeed, vacuous. I will give the committee an example of what I have in mind. How can anybody either in this chamber or outside reconcile statements of the minister with his past onslaughts on tight money or, indeed, with the present facts in relation to high interest rates? On page 997 of *Hansard* the minister is reported as saying:

No one can accuse the present government of doing anything to create an increase in interest rates.

All right. Would the minister say something about what this government has done to reduce interest rates? He says he has done nothing to increase them. I should like to know what is different about the present government's performance in relation to the central bank, the method of selling treasury bills, marketable securities or any other type of government security, from that which he criticized when he was on the hustings and talking about the tight money policy.

I regret having to point out some of the very unfortunate circumstances surrounding the cost of money today, not only to the federal government but to other governments and to the private commerce of our country. I know that we have been told, not only in recent debates but even last year—and when the Conservatives were in power in the thirties they had the same argument to make in reply to any criticism by the opposition; they inferred that criticism was disloyal and that the communists might hear it—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Would the hon. gentleman permit me to interrupt him? Is he proposing now to embark on a full dress debate on these questions? I ask this because he, I think, must recall the words that were very often used in the past by my predecessors, particularly by Mr. Abbott, who consistently took the stand that a motion for interim supply was not an appropriate motion for opening up a general debate. Mr. Chairman, we are going to have a budget debate

soon, and I call to the attention of all hon. members that an undertaking is always given by the Minister of Finance, when the present type of motion for interim supply is under consideration, that the full rights of all members will be respected and that they will be able to discuss any item of supply when it is called in due course in committee of supply. The whole purpose of such an undertaking is to avoid duplication of debate. It was never intended that a motion for interim supply should be the occasion for a full dress debate.

This is not a motion to resolve the house into committee of supply, upon which it would be appropriate to raise questions which might be called grievances, or to introduce amendments in relation to matters upon which the house might wish to divide. The hon. gentleman is familiar with these procedures, and has had experience with regard to them, having been parliamentary assistant to the minister of finance when this same position was consistently taken by my predecessors. He will appreciate that if a motion for interim supply is to be made the occasion for a general debate, it will simply mean that there is bound to be a very extended discussion. Is it not the wish of the committee that this course is the one which should be taken, having regard to the program which is still before us and the number of items to be passed before the Easter recess?

Mr. Caron: Mr. Chairman, may I refer to Beauchesne's Fourth Edition, page 192, 59(2), which simply says:

Speeches in committee of the whole house must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under consideration.

As we are voting one-sixth of the whole budget for 1959-60, I think the remarks which are being made on the general nature of the administration are relevant, and even if it has been the custom in the past, on certain occasions, not to have a full-fledged debate on these matters I think the hon. member should be permitted to continue his remarks on the general nature of the estimates now before the committee.

Mr. Benidickson: Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Finance has done as his predecessors have done, and is pointing out that subsequent debate will not be denied to members of the house, because no one item is being completed under the resolution he is presenting. That never in the past restrained the Minister of Finance and his associates when they were on the opposition side of the house from debating particular items which they felt could not wait for the estimates to come up.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That is not true.

Mr. Benidickson: That is certainly true. It reduced debate undoubtedly because we were