

Supply—Justice

insignificant fraction of all the cases involved. We want to know on what sort of principles the security officers are to act.

I have read with great interest what the Prime Minister said about the fact that in certain cases relationship creates a security risk. Yet, Mr. Chairman, have the principles for applying this been worked out so that we do not get the situation as revealed by the Knott case and many other cases where a remote—indeed in that case a mistaken—relationship was used to debar a person from useful service? Every one of us in this house will probably know of someone who has an uncle or aunt who has attended a communist meeting or might be in the bad books of the R.C.M.P. Are their nephews and nieces to be debarred from public service? It is true the procedure we have here will assist in enabling those cases to be scrutinized, and as I have said I welcome what has been done. But I say to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice that although this is a step forward, I think they would do better to avail themselves of tried judicial independent proceedings to solve their problems, as was done by their predecessors in wartime in the last great war.

I am not happy about this tribunal of internal civil servants, no matter how much we may happen to respect them. I give warning to the government that there are many other matters dealing with this field which require to be carefully investigated, and we feel it is our duty as an opposition to bring these cases forward and keep up a continuing vigilance. We are not going to be fobbed off by a tribunal, no matter how much we welcome this as a recognition of the problem. We are going to continue to urge that these matters be scrutinized in parliament and that independent procedures be preferred.

I have a number of observations I wish to make about the estimates generally, Mr. Chairman, but I take it at this stage it would be appropriate to deal only with the matters announced by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Knowles: No, go ahead.

Mr. Brewin: I am encouraged by some of my colleagues in my immediate neighbourhood to deal with other matters affecting the Department of Justice as well. I know that one point I have to make the minister will agree with, if he agrees with nothing else, and that is the Department of Justice over which he presides is a key department, and at the present stage of the Canadian history the leadership of the minister and his department is urgently needed. I hope the minister will demonstrate I am wrong when I say it does not seem to me that he and his department

[Mr. Brewin.]

have shown the type of leadership required to do the important task committed to them.

I do not propose to discuss at length the skyrocketing price of sugar. I am aware that the small staff of the combines investigation branch does the best it can. I am also aware, as the minister indicated, that there are constitutional difficulties about controlling the price of commodities. But I must say that the impression given by the minister in answering questions on this subject seems to me to indicate the futility of the present machinery and the lack of decisive will to tackle profiteering in essential commodities.

We live in an age when the ramifications of government are many and growing. The struggle between liberty and authority which characterizes all human societies is unending and is particularly acute at the present time. In this battle, the grievances of citizens who find themselves badly treated by those in authority require, if they are to be remedied, new institutional methods as well as unceasing vigilance on the part of the Department of Justice. We have heard today about one field of these interests but there are many others which are important. One of the pieces of machinery which is being suggested from every side of this house is the creation of a parliamentary commissioner or ombudsman. This proposal has been before the house for some time. Indeed, it is the subject of a resolution sponsored by the hon. member for Port Arthur. I do not propose to discuss this subject at length, but I say to the Minister of Justice that such a commissioner has proved his value overseas in countries where the system has been tried—in Sweden, and, more recently, in Denmark and in New Zealand. The existence of a great bureaucracy is not, in my opinion, a sinister thing. It is inevitable. Most of its purposes are beneficial. But people get hurt by the activities of government. When men of substance get hurt they do not have too much of a problem; they can hire expensive lawyers to defend their interests. But when men of lesser means get hurt by this infinity of regulations and procedures they often find themselves without any effective remedy. What I suggest is needed is an official of parliament who has full power to investigate, to secure the production of documents, to arrange a settlement of grievances where possible and to report to the house. On May 22, the Minister of Justice, in answer to a question of mine, expressed interest but disclaimed responsibility. I should have thought the Minister of Justice had a special responsibility to advise parliament of steps which could be taken to strengthen the civil rights of Canadians and not leave it to the