

Economic Forecast for Current Year

Mr. Pickersgill: Now we will have some more closure.

Mr. Martin (Essex East):—the privileged document, the secret, confidential document which the Prime Minister so brazenly displayed for the house to see and the country to note, contrary to our practice, contrary to the traditions of parliamentary practice in countries like ours.

Mr. Fulton: Does my hon. friend think it was a mistake?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Of course it was a mistake, and my hon. friend from Bonavista-Twillingate also said it was a mistake. The contention of the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate is that, having established this practice, the Prime Minister owes to the house, as does his government, the right to receive a document which the Prime Minister argued on January 20, 1958 he had a right to reveal to the house.

Mr. Pickersgill: And which he said should have been revealed months before.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): And which should have been revealed without a motion of this kind being put forward. The man who signed the economic report of 1957, produced on January 20, 1958, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, said—

Mr. Churchill: Order.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): He said:

Look at what happened to the economic outlook reports—

Mr. Speaker: Order. There appears to be some question as to the relevancy of the line of argument the hon. member is following. The motion is to produce a current document. The hon. member is seeking to introduce what Mr. Mitchell Sharp said about a document in 1958.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): What I am seeking—

Mr. Speaker: I fail to see the relevance of that at this moment. Perhaps before the hon. member proceeds he could tell me what is the relevance.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I can appreciate Your Honour's difficulty and I want to help Your Honour, because you do approach these things with an impartiality which all of us in this house greatly respect.

Mr. Smallwood: The hon. member for Hull certainly did not.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): What I am seeking to do is analyse the words of the Minister of Trade and Commerce. I am saying that, having in mind what his predecessor said, what has been the practice throughout, and in the light of the words used by the

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

present Minister of Trade and Commerce, it cannot now be concluded that he is not in receipt of reports which in principle constitute what the Prime Minister gave to this house, improperly, on January 20, 1958.

Mr. Hees: Don't be ridiculous.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I say to the Minister of Trade and Commerce—

Mr. Hees: And I say to you, "Stop being ridiculous; stop being pompous".

Mr. Martin (Essex East):—do not preclude us from obtaining information which you have in your possession—

Mr. Hees: I have not.

Mr. Martin (Essex East):—and which the Prime Minister said should be given to the house and it should not require a motion to obtain it. It is because I am seeking to establish that the words used by the Minister of Trade and Commerce really mean, in effect, that there are documents, that I am referring to these words of a former deputy minister of trade and commerce.

Mr. Speaker: With due respect to the hon. member's argument, I cannot see the relevance of recalling the words of a civil servant who is not now in the department and does not know what the practice is at the present time.

Mr. Hees: On a question of privilege, the hon. member has persistently said that there is a document similar to a document which I say does not exist. I have told him over and over again that I receive information almost daily from my economists, verbally and by way of working papers. There is nothing in the form of a formal report such as the hon. member is asking for. It does not exist. I receive information at various times and in various forms, but I receive nothing in the form of a document of the kind the hon. member is asking for. He says I have it. I have told him I do not have it, and he must take my word for it.

Mr. Speaker: I have been a little troubled over that aspect of the argument. It is customary in the house to accept the word—

Mr. Pickersgill: Can I say a word on the question of privilege?

Mr. Speaker: If he feels he has to, the hon. member may do so later on.

It has been the practice of most hon. members to accept the word of another member given in his place—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I accept it readily.

Mr. Speaker:—on a matter which is peculiarly within his own knowledge. There is