

Interim Supply

until April 1 when the estimates come into effect before any debate could be allowed.

I would also suggest with great deference, Mr. Chairman, that the voice of parliament has been silenced on this issue in accordance with citation 161, a citation which, I think, might well be changed. Nonetheless, in accordance with citation 161 the voice of parliament on this important question of human rights and fundamental freedoms has been silenced for a year. I suggest that this silence should no longer continue.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Could I have a ruling on the point of order which I raised, Mr. Chairman? The hon. gentleman is not discussing that point of order at all.

Mr. Argue: The hon. minister cannot rise on a point of order while a point of order is being discussed. I should have thought that a man so well acquainted with the rules would know that it is improper to interrupt with a point of order while a point of order is being discussed.

I have asked you, Mr. Chairman, with deference, if you would consider the position in which parliament is placed with regard to the discussion of this important question, and I have said that in accordance with citation 161 the voice of parliament has been silenced for the period of one year, and that although this rule provides for the silencing of parliament during that period, parliament should not be silenced tonight with regard to dealing with this subject which, according to the rules, it is now proper to discuss. I suggest that this matter is on all fours with the discussion of unemployment, the Unemployment Insurance Act and any other matter which can be related to the items included in these estimates.

Mr. Pearson: It is, of course, quite clear that in the past a great deal of latitude has been given in the discussion on requests for interim supply. As I have previously mentioned, there is a very good precedent recorded in *Hansard* for 1957 to illustrate the latitude which has customarily been given. The practice of that time has gone on for many years, and many hon. members have spoken on a variety of subjects. Toward the end of the debate, the hon. member for Prince Albert, now Prime Minister, got up and introduced a subject, and these are his words—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Page?

Mr. Pearson: Page 2845. He said:

Mr. Chairman, there is a matter which I wish to bring to the attention of the Department of National Revenue—

The hon. gentleman spoke on this for some minutes—

—and that is the need for action to be taken to keep open the port of West Poplar, Saskatchewan, from 9 a.m. until 10 p.m.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): What bearing has that on this point of order?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Surely it makes you look ridiculous.

Mr. Pickersgill: It shows you the kind of things you did when you were over here.

The Chairman: The ruling I gave this afternoon when I was dealing with the references by the hon. member for Essex East on the subject of unemployment should apply in the present case. I understand that one point raised by the hon. member for Assiniboia was that until the expiration of the one-year period the matter of the disallowance of the Newfoundland legislation could not be discussed in parliament. It can be discussed from now on, but at the appropriate time, and I do not think this is the appropriate time. It may be that the rules which concern us here have not always been applied in connection with motions for interim supply. There is, of course, the practical problem of applying the rules, and also the application of the rules in principle; and what the Chair is called upon to do is to apply the rules in principle.

As I said this afternoon, I think that reference to special matters—not general matters that would be arguments for refusing to vote interim supply—are not relevant, and therefore I rule that this question cannot be discussed at this time.

Mr. Argue: Mr. Chairman, we have gone over this ground all afternoon in connection with another subject and I cannot for the life of me believe that you would be endeavouring to apply one particular rule this afternoon and another rule tonight.

Some hon. Members: Order.

The Chairman: The only thing I can say is I hope I will have more success in applying my rulings tonight than I had this afternoon.

Mr. Argue: Mr. Chairman, I think that is the greatest admission one could have that there was a great deal of leeway allowed this afternoon in discussing questions covered by this vote. I believe that the question of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which comes within the purview of the privy council and therefore within the purview of this parliament, can be discussed. In order to bring that discussion about—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, as I understand it you have made your ruling and that concludes the matter unless the hon. member chooses to