

Interim Supply

Mr. Graftey: What righteous pomposity.

Mr. Winch: Before we grant them one sixth of the money required for the coming year we must ask them whether they will outline their policy in regard to unemployment. We must ask them to tell us why there have been changes in unemployment insurance and a tightening up of the regulations. In asking for one sixth of the money for the coming year will they tell us why there has been no increase granted to civil servants? What is their policy with regard to the complaints, the requests and the recommendations of the civil service?

At a time when they are asking for interim supply for the Minister of Veterans Affairs, will they tell the committee and the people of Canada, as well as the veterans of Canada, why although in the veterans committee the minister made a very definite commitment—it cannot be interpreted in any other way—that a revision of the veterans act would be brought in during this session—

Mr. Brooks: I ask the hon. member to tell us what definite commitment the Minister of Veterans Affairs made?

Mr. Winch: I am speaking from memory now. The statement was made before the veterans affairs committee last year that there would be a revision of the act and that the position of veterans was being most carefully considered and action would be taken at this session of parliament.

Mr. Brooks: No such statement was made.

Mr. Winch: All I can say is that in my estimation the minister has completely renegeed on the very clear statement made in the committee last year. I refer the minister to his own statement, which will be found in the transcript.

Mr. Brooks: I remember my own statement, Mr. Chairman, and I will relate it to the hon. member. I said it was our plan to consider the Pension Act this year, just the same as it has been the plan of a good many people in this house to do a great many things. However, this was not possible. For instance, the opposition planned to be the government at this time. This was not carried out in 1957.

Mr. Winch: That is a very bright comment by the minister. All I am going to say is, it is possible for me to be wrong, but I do not think it is possible for the entire Canadian Legion, the army and the navy to be wrong in their understanding of what was said and what they expect from the minister at this time.

The estimates before us cover the field of trade, unemployment, pensions, security

for all the people, and so forth. Up to now answers have not been forthcoming from the government. The motion before the committee gives hon. members a real opportunity to exercise their power to vote or to withhold money. It gives the government the opportunity to explain its policies, to give us answers to the questions and to answer the grievances that have been raised and are being raised by hon. members who are elected to represent the people.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we appreciate the fact you have ruled that this amendment is in order and that you are now allowing a discussion on all phases of government expenditures. We expect that the members on the Conservative side who prate so much about the rights of parliament, who prate so much about the rights of hon. members, will see those rights maintained, although they have been somewhat negated in the past and up until now. I am going to say this and I say it because I sat with many of the Conservative members when they were on this side of the house. Will they change from being Christians only on Sunday and be Christians seven days of the week?

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, the amendment moved by the hon. member for Laurier is now before the committee. It is an amendment to reduce the estimates of interim supply that the minister is asking for by the sum of \$10,000. I want to make it quite clear that I do not intend to talk about that \$10,000 because, as the hon. member for Assiniboia said when he spoke and as the hon. member for Essex East said when he spoke, this is a time-honoured device in parliament to enable the opposition, or indeed even members who are normally followers of the government, if they have any spunk and any independence, to object to the way the government is behaving.

I wish to object to the way in which the government has treated one of the most urgent problems, indeed, in my opinion and in the opinion I think of everyone on this side of the house, the most urgent domestic problem before the country at the present time, as was underlined yesterday by the statements which were released with extreme reluctance and are released from month to month with the most extreme reluctance by the administration.

Now, sir, what I think is the most objectionable thing of all is that the government not only has no policy to deal with this problem, but they pretend the problem does not exist. Not only do they pretend the problem does not exist, but they use all the means of propaganda at their disposal outside this house, and I emphasize the fact,