

Supply—Labour

I give the Minister of Labour an opportunity right away, before I go on discussing these other proposals, to say whether the government will call such a conference; whether the government will establish a parliamentary committee, or whether it proposes, instead, to embark upon the so-called effective debating argument of saying nothing in reply at all. I can only say that if the last-named course is followed we shall keep at this matter in this house until the government does take steps which will satisfy us that at long last it means to do something about unemployment. What answer is there to the proposal we made that the suggestion of the Canadian Congress of Labour should be adopted and the government should call a conference of industry and labour? Is there anything wrong in that?

The Chairman: Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. gentleman, but his time has expired. If the committee gives unanimous consent there will be no objection, of course, to his continuing. I have already taken into consideration the time taken up by interruptions. Is it the unanimous wish of the committee to give such consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I thank the committee for its consideration, but I do not want to accept it on those terms. I allowed hon. gentlemen to intervene. I gave way, and I say there is a rule that if there is an intervention the time runs from the time that intervention ends.

Mr. Starr: It has been agreed that the hon. member should have time, counting the interventions, to carry on with his speech; and at this point, if it is agreeable, I should like to ask him to clarify the reference concerning the suggestion attributed to the Canadian Labour Congress. Where was that suggestion made?

The Chairman: Before the hon. member for Essex East continues his speech, I should like to point out that I cannot accept his interpretation of the rule. The hon. member knows very well that he is not obliged to accept any questions which are put to him and it would be easy, of course, if we were to adopt his interpretation, for an hon. member to arrange or to provoke a question and thus keep the floor indefinitely. I suggest to the hon. member that he should accept the unanimous permission of the committee to continue his remarks.

Mr. Chevrier: I do not want to press the point unduly, but I think it should be brought to your attention that there is a difference

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

between a question and an intervention. There is no doubt that there has been one intervention if not two, during the time the hon. member for Essex East was speaking, and that being the case I believe he has the right to go on for another 40 minutes. As I say, I do not wish to press the point unduly because the committee has been good enough to give unanimous consent to my hon. friend proceeding, but I would not like to have you rule that there has not been an intervention and that the hon. member for Essex East must sit down at this time.

The Chairman: I must say that I do not see the difference between a question and an intervention or an interruption. Besides, it is easy to provoke any of them; therefore I cannot accept the interpretation of the rule which the hon. member suggests. As I said before, the hon. member having unanimous consent we might reserve a decision on this point for the time being.

Mr. Macdonnell: I wonder if the hon. member would allow me to ask a question which he parried before. I wanted to know if he was going to adjust his percentages by reason of the very substantial additional figures which were pointed out to him and which entirely invalidate, as I understand, the percentages he has been using and on which he has laid such stress.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I can only tell the hon. gentleman that the figures I have are based upon the statistical survey—the last one I used was that of November—put out by the bureau of statistics. The hon. gentleman will find that the situation is not just as he has indicated, and I will deal with that later in the day. I want now to continue the particular point to which I was addressing myself. I do not want to appear to ignore any question asked by any hon. member, and I am very grateful that in these circumstances the committee in its present generous mood has recognized the desirability of my completing at least this phase of what I have to say.

The Minister of Labour has asked when the president of the congress made this suggestion. It was made first of all when the congress met the government a year ago. It was contained in their brief. It was repeated by the president of the Canadian Congress of Labour about a month ago when he spoke to the board of trade in Toronto. When the congress of labour met the government the other day and made its annual representations it was not specifically spelled out, but in that brief the congress said that it renewed all previous representations made upon which action has not yet been taken.