

Interim Supply

the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice. I emphasize that this is not the time for that kind of debate.

The Chairman: It is not my opinion that actual matters affecting the departments of ministers who are not in the house cannot be debated even during the ministers' absence. However, once again, in line with the remarks I made in my ruling a few minutes ago, I must remind hon. members that since we are at present in committee of supply debating an interim supply matter we should limit our remarks more to matters concerning sums of money rather than other principles. Otherwise the principle of relevancy would not be observed. I must therefore ask hon. members please to try to restrict their remarks to the matter that is being discussed at this time.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I am taking advantage of the minister's coming before the house and asking for interim supply. In this interim supply the minister is asking for money that would go to Newfoundland for the services of that province. I do not see how one can talk about money only without talking about policy in relation to the money, its expenditure and the surrounding circumstances.

Mr. Chairman, I have had two starts. I hope I can get away satisfactorily this time. I would have been finished now if the Minister of Finance had not got on his high horse. I should remind him, Mr. Chairman, that when I am talking, no other member of this group is talking because we have only opportunity to talk one at a time. I must say that we were extremely sorry about the reply the Prime Minister made the other day to the request of the Canadian Labour Congress and to the request of the premier of Newfoundland that an investigation be conducted into these unusual happenings in Newfoundland. We think such an investigation would have been of great advantage to all parties concerned. I think it was wanted by a large number of people in Canada and that it would have established the truth in these matters where there are such wide differences of opinion.

In that connection before proceeding I want to refer to the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate whom I had the dubious pleasure of witnessing on "Press Conference" last night and his vigorous defence of the loss of freedom of choice of the Newfoundland people and their rights and his, I must say, amazing performance in which he was able to reconcile opposites and make national Liberal policy and provincial Liberal policy appear as one. The hon. member said this, and I wish he were in the chamber because

I do not like talking about members when they are absent. These are the words used by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate on "Press Conference" last night when being interviewed by the press men. He said in part:

I talked to Mr. Knowles about this at the press gallery dinner. I don't think it was a private conversation.

As a matter of fact, I made inquiry of Mr. Knowles and he tells me that it was a private conversation. The hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate went on to say this:

I asked Mr. Knowles why it was that the I.W.A. had jumped all the way from British Columbia to Newfoundland. He said that was a difficult question and he didn't try to answer it.

My point is this, Mr. Chairman. I think it is somewhat unethical to quote from a private conversation on a press conference in this country, and particularly a private conversation at a press gallery dinner which even the press itself treats as being so confidential that never a line appears in the papers about it. I am rather surprised at the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate doing that. I am sure that the members of the committee generally will consider his remarks to be somewhat unethical. If we were all to go on "Press Conference"—

The Chairman: Order. I must with regret tell the hon. member for Kootenay West that his present remarks are quite out of order. If I heard them correctly, he is at present criticizing the reference which was made at a press conference to a private conversation and his remarks are directed mostly to the question of the ethics to be observed under certain circumstances. This matter has no reference to the item under discussion. I must therefore tell him that I must rule these remarks out of order.

Mr. Herridge: Thank you for your ruling, Mr. Chairman.

An hon. Member: They got on the record.

Mr. Herridge: I shall have to complete my remarks on a question of privilege later. But in any event I was extremely sorry to observe his course of action because I do not think it was quite up to the hon. member's usual standard. Now I do not know quite where I am at.

An hon. Member: You are in the woods.

Mr. Herridge: Anyway, we in this group urge the members of the government to give reconsideration to their decision with respect to this request for an inquiry into the whole situation in Newfoundland. It is not too late for this matter to be reconsidered. We