

Interim Supply

estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1961, laid before the House of Commons at the present session of parliament, \$593,558,978.34; (b) seven twelfths of the amount of item 212 of the said estimates, \$904,166.67; (c) one third of the amount of item 36 of the said estimates, \$216,666.67; (d) one sixth of the total of the amounts of items 176, 183 and 184 of the said estimates, \$615,247.00; (e) one twelfth of the total of the amounts of items 62, 263, 367, 394, 460 and 463 of the said estimates, \$8,193,843.84; be granted to Her Majesty on account of the fiscal year ending March 31, 1961.

He said: Mr. Chairman, this resolution asks the house to make provision for two months interim supply in the new fiscal year 1960-61, to make provision for the needs of government for the months of April and May. The resolution asks for the equivalent of one sixth of all items in the main estimates be granted, and also certain additional fractions of 11 named items be granted. With respect to each of these 11 items there are common features in the sense that these relate to programs which do not work out evenly month by month throughout the year. In every case the program involves additional expenditure in the early part of the year. That, in each case, is the reason for asking an additional fraction of each of these 11 items. In no case will the additional fraction involve the commitment of the entire item.

I give the committee the usual assurance that the passage of this resolution and the bill to be founded upon it will not prejudice the rights and privileges of hon. members to criticize any items in the estimates when these are reached for consideration in the committee of supply in due course and such rights and privileges of hon. members will be respected and will not be curtailed or restricted in any way as a result of the passing of this measure. I may say that the bill to follow is in the usual form of interim supply bills as passed at the last session.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Chairman, we have had during the present session of parliament some discussion on unemployment. Some hon. members sitting opposite have felt that too much discussion on this subject has taken place during the present session. However, whatever may have been the views of some hon. gentlemen with regard to this serious problem in our country, little doubt can now exist as to the propriety of the former discussion and the justification for projecting this question once again on the floor of this chamber particularly in the light of the release yesterday by the Minister of Trade and Commerce of the figures on employment in Canada during the month of February.

From that release we learned that the unemployment situation continues to become more and more serious. We learned that the

number of persons with jobs was estimated to be 5,663,000 in February, down 36,000 from the previous month, January, 1960. We know that almost three quarters of the decline, was in agriculture. Nevertheless there was a non-farm employment decrease by 10,000 to an estimated 5,095,000.

We are further told by the Minister of Trade and Commerce who reports for the bureau of statistics that the number of persons without jobs and seeking work was estimated to be 555,000 in February, 51,000 more than in the previous month of January. We are told that most of this increase occurred in the province of Quebec. We are also told that the number of job seekers represented 8.9 per cent of the labour force compared to 8.8 per cent in February of 1959 and 9.4 per cent in February of 1958. We are told, in addition, that the workers on temporary lay-off were estimated to number 43,000, about the same as the month before, and 10,000 more than a year earlier.

The release of the minister also indicates that employment declined more than seasonally in the Quebec region between January and February, that employment in Ontario decreased by an estimated 10,000 between January and February, just about usual for this time of the year, that employment in the prairie regions declined between January and February, a decrease of 5,000 from the estimate of persons with jobs of 986,000 or 11,000 higher than a year earlier, and that in the Pacific region an end of the seasonal employment decline was apparent.

We are therefore face to face with the fact that on the lowest figure available, 555,000 persons in Canada are designated as being without work. In the previous release for the month of January the figure was 504,000. Hon. members will want to compare these figures which are referred to in table No. 1 of the release with the figure of 537,000 for February 21, 1959, the corresponding period in the year before the present one. In other words, the increase in this particular period as compared with the previous month a year ago is 18,000 and the total number of men out of work as compared with January, as I indicated, is 55,000 more.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Chairman, I am rising on a point of order. I have been following the hon. gentleman in what he has to say. I take it that he is embarking on a speech on unemployment. Whether he is raising this under the guise of a grievance is not clear but it seems to me that it must be quite obvious now that the hon. gentleman is treating the present proceeding as the equivalent of a motion to resolve the house into committee of supply, the kind of motion