

Supply—Justice

If the government is in the right on this matter, as Mr. Cardin says, it has nothing to fear from such an inquiry.

I plead with the Prime Minister, that these words are obviously right. I plead with the minister that these words are obviously right. They have nothing to fear. No harm will be done. Justice will be done and will appear to be done where now it does not appear to be done. I had hoped, Mr. Chairman, that after thinking about it and discussing it with their colleagues the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice would have changed their minds. I had particularly hoped that when I had brought the attention of the minister and the Prime Minister to the fact that Mr. Spencer has asked for an inquiry they would immediately agree to give him one because he is the aggrieved person.

I got the impression from the minister's words that he was not going to budge. We believe this issue to be of basic importance to the rights of individuals, to the concept of civil liberty and particularly of importance for the protection and security of government employees to make sure they will not be turned out without a chance of having their say before an independent tribunal.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move that vote No. 1 of the estimates of the Department of Justice be reduced by \$17,000. I have this motion in both French and English. I hope my French translation is accurate.

The minister's salary, of course, is statutory. I cannot do anything about that.

But I want to be frank with the minister and tell him that the choice of the amount of \$17,000 is to make it clear that this is an expression of lack of confidence in the minister and in the way he has handled the Spencer case.

If the minister will rise and say, in view of the telegram which has made it known to him that Mr. Spencer wants an inquiry, that he, the minister, will make further inquiries to satisfy himself that Mr. Spencer wants it—he does not have to accept this wire—and will say to this committee, when he has made inquiries and found that Mr. Spencer wants a judicial inquiry, that he will give him one, nothing will give me greater pleasure than to withdraw this motion and pay the highest compliment and respect to the minister for that decision.

The Chairman: Order, please. It is moved by Mr. Lewis that Vote No. 1 of the estimates of the Department of Justice be reduced by \$17,000.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Chairman, with the last words of the member of York South I am sure all hon. members of the committee will agree, namely, that it is to be earnestly hoped that the Minister of Justice will now realize the untenable position which he is in and in which his colleagues and the government are pinioning him in regard to ordering a judicial inquiry. If a judicial inquiry is ordered, then I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that the members of this party too will support the member for York South in withdrawing the motion. In the absence of any such direction on the part of the government there will, of course, be no alternative but to support the motion.

It is not easy to take part in this debate and say some of the things that I intend to say. I would much rather not have to say them. I debated with myself very earnestly whether I should participate in the debate at all. I was pretty well resolved on the question in favour of participating and any lingering doubts I had were completely removed by the regrettable and reprehensible conduct of the government and of the Minister of Justice in the course of the debate so far today.

What does the minister do? He absolutely refuses to realize that there is here an extremely important issue not only involving the freedom and liberty of the individual, although that is one of its most important aspects, but also involving the conduct and reputation of the government and therefore necessarily himself as Minister of Justice in connection with the administration of justice. That is what is involved.

The attack upon the minister is not a personal one but he chooses to treat it as such. It was obvious from his reply to the Leader of the Opposition that he fails altogether to realize that and in his failure he is unfortunately supported by his colleagues. I cannot help but feel that some of the major responsibility rests upon other members of the government from the Prime Minister down who have placed him in this impossible position.

• (2:50 p.m.)

The minister does not realize the issue involved but regards the criticism instead as a personal attack on himself. He showed that he still does not appreciate the responsibilities of his office or the untenable position in which he has been placed. So he deals with the matter in his reply this morning only in personal and subjective terms. He did the same in his defence with respect to bankruptcy. He said "No matter how much you urge