

Interim Supply

of this parliament to examine the expenditures, and I was going to say the proposed expenditures for the coming year, but we are already well into the fiscal year. If this interim supply is granted, six months of the present fiscal year will have gone by before the people's representatives will have any opportunity whatever of examining the purpose for which the money is being spent.

As my leader has just said, there are items such as Canadaair and many others concerning which this house and the people of Canada would like information before the items are passed. What is the result of this government calling for dissolution at this time and in the precipitate manner in which it has? The result is that an election will be held towards the end of June and people will be asked to vote for the various candidates. We suppose the government will have candidates running, and it is a fair assumption that they will ask for support on the basis of their record. What opportunity has there been to examine the record of this government so far as the expenditures of the previous year are concerned or the proposed expenditures for the fiscal year in which we are now? In other words, the government has said, "We will go to the country and if we are returned by any possible chance, then we ourselves will examine our own estimates." Is that the way the Canadian people feel that they should be treated, that their money should be so callously disregarded that they have no control whatever over the expenditures of the government?

If the budget amounted to only a small part of the total national income, the matter might not be so important, although the principle would be just as important as it is for the greater amount. We know, however, that the national budget today is a very large proportion of the total national income of this country. Yet no opportunity is to be given to the members of parliament, the members representing the people of Canada, to examine how the government proposes to spend that money, which is already being disbursed. We find ourselves in a constitutional position which is not only grotesque, but is a travesty on all British institutions; for a Prime Minister asks the Governor General for dissolution when we have not had an opportunity of examining the record and the proposed expenditures of this government.

There has been, Mr. Chairman, no opportunity to discuss the budget resolutions. It is utterly impossible for us to have any opportunity of discussing the budget resolutions between now and the proposed dissolution either today or tomorrow. What is the result of that? It means that the deductions are being made from pay rolls, that taxes are being collected, that customs duties are being

levied for perhaps six months, without any of these particular exactions having passed the parliament of this country. This is a very peculiar position.

May I say a word or two about the budget which has been brought down but which has not been endorsed by parliament. In general, I cannot say that I disagree with many of the items in the budget itself. The tremendous surplus which the government has been exacting from the people over and above the necessary expenditures has been returned in part; so that in place of a surplus of approximately \$600 million which we had in the last fiscal year we are, according to the government estimates, now budgeting for a surplus of \$87 million. I do not think that they can be criticized for budgeting for so little in the way of a surplus. Indeed, it is only a token surplus, and I do not know whether, with the added expenditures, some of which I shall refer to later, that surplus will be adequate to cover the additional expenditures which are being made.

I should like to point out that the so-called cyclical budget theory to which the government subscribed for several years has now gone by the board completely, and we are wondering just what has happened to the principle which the government said was a good one when that idea of cyclical budgeting was first put into effect. One thing that I should like to point out to the committee with regard to this idea of a cyclical budget is this. During the years when the great surpluses were accumulated and taken from the struggling taxpayers, there never was at any time in the original budget estimate any substantial surplus to be compared with the surplus which resulted at the end of the fiscal year. In other words, it would seem that the tremendous budget surpluses which we have had were largely fortuitous. The government never expected to have them. They happened more by accident, because of the great volume of business which was transacted in the country, all of which was in one form or another subjected to taxation. Indeed, as to the main items in the present budget I can only say that I, and I am sure many others in the Progressive Conservative party, feel much like the salesman who has been trying to land an order for four or five years and has at last succeeded in getting a fairly good one. Many of the main items in the budget are things which we have been petitioning for on behalf of our people for four or five years.

I cannot refrain from reporting to the committee two or three descriptions of the budget which I received from people in humble circumstances the morning after the budget was presented, because we on this side of the