

Interim Supply

supplementary estimates. I feel that we would end in a trap, in view of the rulings that were made, if it was agreed to postpone discussion of this particular subject, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

I put forward this thought to Your Honour. Would it not be possible for a member of the house at this time to move that we do not vote one-sixth of the supply for the months of April and May for a particular item, such as the administration of the mounted police, because certain members are not satisfied that the committee has had an adequate opportunity to discuss the program of that force for the two months for which the force is being given this blank cheque?

Mr. Regier: Before you make a final ruling on this matter, Mr. Chairman, I may say that your early indication would leave serious implications for us. Never in my six years of experience has the opposition been prevented before on an interim supply motion from discussing something that broadly affects the policies of the government—

The Chairman: I regret to interrupt the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam, but I should like to inform him and the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River that the Chair did not rule out the debate on the present matter. It was simply a request that was made that this matter to which the hon. member for Kootenay West referred be discussed when the detailed estimates come along. This was a request made in line with the paragraph to which the hon. member referred in May's 16th edition.

It is stated in the latter part of the paragraph:

—the proper occasion to examine the grants in detail is when the final grant to complete the sum demanded is proposed to the committee.

The Chair has not ruled out of order the debate upon which the hon. member is starting, but has simply requested that members limit their remarks as much as possible to matters of a general nature on these items. I must also bring to the attention of the hon. member the fact that since we are discussing the question of supply we cannot allow debates to stray into all fields, in all directions, and consequently if this matter is discussed it will have to be debated with the greatest possible respect for the question of relevancy.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your opinion in this connection. It was not my intention to go into the details of these estimates. We intend to go into them very fully when the main estimates come before the committee, at which time the ministers and departmental officials will be

[Mr. Benidickson.]

here. What I am dealing with is something more in the line of general principles which concern the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice.

As I said before, I was going to deal first with the request of the Canadian Labour Congress for an inquiry into the unfortunate and regrettable incidents in Newfoundland, and a similar request for a judicial inquiry by Premier Smallwood to the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Let us clarify this matter for the guidance of us all. My hon. friend has indicated he is proposing to initiate a debate on a subject which concerns the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice. This emphasizes the point that I was seeking to make earlier, Mr. Chairman, a point which has been recognized in this house all the time that my hon. friend and I have been members of this house. When the house is in committee of supply for the purpose of granting interim supply we do not have debates involving other ministers. The Minister of Finance is the only minister who takes part in the discussion of interim supply. This has been the invariable practice all the time my hon. friend and I have been in the house.

If he wishes to find an occasion for debating the question that he has indicated, one involving the Prime Minister and my colleague the Minister of Justice, I can assure him this is not the occasion. I have no doubt, that my hon. friend will have other occasions. However, this is not the occasion. If I may say so, my hon. friend approaches this matter as though this were a motion to resolve the house into committee of supply on which he can raise grievances or introduce amendments to test the feeling of the house on a particular issue that he chooses to raise as a grievance. But that is not the situation we are in now. We are in committee on this motion for interim supply.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I certainly cannot agree with the Minister of Finance that in the absence of other ministers he does not represent them in dealing with interim supply or supplementary estimates. That matter has arisen on a number of occasions throughout the years. If he were in interim supply or on supplementary estimates he would answer for the minister who was not present.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Quite so. Let there be no misunderstanding. I am here to answer with respect to the present motion within the proper limits of the present proceedings. My hon. friend has indicated he wishes to raise a matter or to initiate a debate on a matter that properly calls, as I understood him to say, for the presence of