

Interim Supply

But since Your Honour has taken that position I can only say that in the recommendations we have made as to the corrective measures which might be taken to deal with this problem we have urged, as the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, that there should be a national advisory board on economic development, automation and employment to help deal with the long term problems of production and employment.

Now, we have not had from the administration any reaction whatsoever to this particular device, and I hope you are not going to suggest, Mr. Chairman, that I am now out of order when I say that in dealing with this problem in the United Kingdom, that is exactly what they have done. There they appointed a body known as the development areas treasury advisory committee consisting of people with industrial, commercial and financial experience who advise on the commercial and financial aspects of applications received under the acts for grants and loans to provide a mitigation of unemployment.

I hope it will not be suggested that in calling on the government to explain why they will not call a conference of government, industry and labour to deal with this problem I am violating the interpretation of the motion now before the house. Why does the government not call such a conference? The Minister of Labour, in defending himself with regard to this problem some months ago, said that the Canadian Labour Congress had commended the government's policies on unemployment. I ask the Minister of Labour to recall the statement made yesterday by the president of the Canadian Labour Congress when he referred to the unemployment figures released yesterday as reflecting a disgraceful situation in Canada. Why is such a conference not called? What has the government to fear from seeking such a conference? One could go on to ask: Why does the government not intensify its vocational training program; why does it not establish an Atlantic provinces capital assistance fund to assist an area where unemployment is the worst in Canada, save for the province of Quebec?

How are we to justify the mandate which has been imposed on us if we do not take every means at our disposal to bring home to the government the seriousness of this problem which cannot now be denied in the face of yesterday's figures? How can we in the opposition say that we have discharged our responsibilities if we do not press the Minister of Labour for a response to every one of the 25 proposals put forward by the

Liberal party? How can the government justify its position in relation to the people of Canada in the light of the assurances given by the Prime Minister unless it replies to the various proposals which have been made? Let the government indicate what is wrong with any one of these proposals, and then we shall at least have some appreciation of the attitude which is being taken toward them. But for the government to sit here day by day and refrain from dealing with these proposals on their merits is to place us in a position, in the opposition, where we can do no more than seek to exhort the government to take steps consistent with policies which its supporters said in two general elections they would introduce.

An hon. Member: While at the same time using closure.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): While at the same time, as my hon. friend said, using methods which amount to closure.

Mr. Aiken: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The hon. member for Essex East has been in this house for a good many years and I have not been here as long, but he has repeated this afternoon on three or four occasions the very statement which he has now made and which I consider to be a direct reflection upon the ruling of the Chair. He seeks to blame the ruling covering the debate on the Minister of Finance. Time after time he has returned to the same point, namely, that the government is seeking to impose closure or to cut off debate. A point of order was raised and it was settled by you, Mr. Chairman, and I think it should not call for any further comment this afternoon.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I thank the hon. member for his very helpful intervention. I am sure he has displayed a great interest in this urgent problem which face the people of the country. All I can say, if the government does not respond by giving some indication whether it is prepared to embark on any of these steps, it is not worthy of the confidence that it is seeking under the procedure which it has brought forward at this time.

I remind the senior minister present in the house, the Minister of Finance—the Minister of Labour is now out of the chamber—that his Prime Minister told the people of Canada in two general elections: "Deficit or no deficit, no one in Canada will suffer because of unemployment as long as I am Prime Minister". That was a solemn commitment. I say now to the Minister of Finance, who is the senior minister present, though he has