

Interim Supply

Mr. Argue: Mr. Chairman, you have not been helpful in this last statement. This motion is designed as a motion of condemnation of a government that mouths its alleged interest in human rights and fundamental freedoms but by its inaction allows them to be torn asunder in our country.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman—

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Peters: I should like to say a few words on the amendment that has been moved to the motion.

An hon. Member: Let us take a vote.

Mr. Peters: When hon. members are calling for a vote without time being given for discussion, are they not doing exactly what we are accusing them of doing in respect of a number of other things? They are calling for a vote because they know they have a large majority in this chamber.

The Chairman: Order. The hon. member has the floor and he can continue without discussing the interjections.

Mr. Peters: I believe we should reduce this vote for the privy council to nothing. I think on interim supply we have a right to discuss these things. I have not been here too long but to me this would appear to be the situation. If we have not these rights, then why is this debate taking place at all? Why does not the government just pass this one sixth of the votes and we will discuss the whole matter on the estimates?

The Chairman: Order. The hon. member is certainly not discussing the amendment when he is discussing the ruling of the Chair. I would ask him to come to the amendment under the guidance of the rulings of the Chair.

Mr. Peters: I did not intend to discuss the whole matter, Mr. Chairman, but it would appear to me that this amendment is a condemnation of the government's handling of a particular matter and that this has reference to and can be related to the estimates under the privy council.

We are not at all satisfied, we are not happy, and I have not been for some time, with the actions of this government, and I think that is true of the Canadian people or at least a large number of them. I should like to point out that these members of the privy council, these leaders of this large majority here, have and should have an obligation to see that democracy functions in the best possible way. That can happen only if there is an opposition and if that opposition is given the opportunity to speak at some length.

[Mr. Chevrier.]

Looking at the government and at the record of some of the members of the privy council, may I say this? The hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe who is not present is a member of that privy council. Over the years I believe he has done his share to make parliament an effective organization. The same is true of the next member of the privy council, namely the hon. member for Greenwood. I have listened to him and I have read speeches of his for years. I was always greatly impressed by the ability shown by the hon. member for Greenwood in his functions as a member of the House of Commons. Certainly his understanding of democracy has been advantageous to the Canadian people. This is more than can be said for a great many of the back benchers that now sit behind him.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. It is refreshing indeed to hear these complimentary remarks with respect to very distinguished members of the House of Commons, but actually this has nothing to do with the amendment before the house. We are dealing with an amendment to item 309, which is an item in relation to the privy council and has nothing whatever to do with the individual members of the privy council.

Mr. Peters: On the point of order, Mr. Chairman—

The Chairman: Order. I do not think I need to hear the hon. member. I have made a number of rulings today and the hon. member knows very well that, in accordance with the rulings I have already given, he is out of order.

Mr. Regier: Speaking on that point of order, Mr. Chairman, may I say that the hon. member was beginning to discuss the present privy council and the amendment has to do with the present privy council. I fail to understand how you, Mr. Chairman, can make the statement that the hon. member was obviously out of order.

The Chairman: I have made it because I have said at least 20 times today that the motion before the committee does not allow discussion of any special problems but just general problems and whether or not interim supply should be voted.

Mr. Martin (Timmins): Speaking on the point of order, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that the present privy council is a general problem.

An hon. Member: And a continuing problem.

Mr. Peters: We have been trying to point out, and have used this method as a way of