

*Interim Supply*

by an interim supply motion, are eligible for discussion? Would you please clarify your ruling as to that?

**The Chairman:** I thought I had made myself clear. I cannot make speeches for hon. members. I said that general references to the administration and policy of the government would be in order provided the speaker did not go into details of any special problem. If the general policies of the government are a justification for criticizing the motion before the committee, very well, but I do not think any such discussion as is now proceeding would be relevant; otherwise, we would be opening a debate wider in scope than the debate on the speech from the throne or the debate on the budget.

**Mr. Pearson:** I refer again to the situation in January, 1956 when this matter was discussed and when the leader of the opposition of that day took strong exception to limiting in any way the right of discussion on such occasions as this. I quote again from what Mr. Drew said as recorded on page 5285:

As will be realized by every hon. member in this house—

Every hon. member did realize it, because a discussion was permitted.

—any item included in the estimates can be discussed—

Such a discussion did take place on that occasion. Furthermore the excuse given by the Minister of Finance that this was a motion for interim supply just before an election does not apply to this case at all. If the discussion of a motion for interim supply is limited in the way you have suggested, Mr. Chairman, we are introducing something into the procedure of the House of Commons which has not been there for centuries. As the present Prime Minister so very well said on one occasion in this house:

Parliament lives because of the opportunity it gives to members to debate the issues of the day untrammelled and uncontrolled and unfeared of an overwhelmingly powerful government.

**The Chairman:** If no ruling was made on that occasion mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, this cannot be a guide for the Chair. Then, as I said, the chairman will decide as the debate proceeds. The only ruling I make now is that a special debate on unemployment, or detailed references to unemployment, is out of order. We have now discussed this question sufficiently, and I trust the hon. member for Essex East will continue his speech.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** The release which I was discussing and which came to us for

the first time yesterday indicates the seriousness of the problem. It seems to me that the growing unemployment in our country is a reflection on the administration of this government in this particular field. The fiscal and other policies of the government have contributed considerably to the serious situation which now confronts us. The release indicates that whereas on January 14 some 755,000 people were designated in the unplaced applicants list of the unemployment service offices, as of February 18 that figure had risen to 800,000, and today the Minister of Labour has pointed out that as of March 10, 827,467 individuals are enrolled in the unplaced applicants list of the N.E.S. registration offices. That figure of 827,000 is to be compared with the figure in the same month of the previous year, 1959, when it stood at 803,494.

Today the Minister of Labour, giving a further indication of maladministration on the part of this government, established that for the month of February there were, using his figure, 783,000 live claimants, that is to say, 783,000 people who are actually receiving unemployment insurance. This reflects a serious situation, a growingly serious situation, and one more serious than in any previous month in 1960, and more serious than in the comparable period of 1959. No wonder we refer to this problem as a continuing one possessing characteristics which are either seasonal, or as the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, cyclical or technological.

Statistics prepared by the international labour office reveal that Canada, in proportion to its population, has the highest measure of unemployment in the western world at the present time. I have compared our situation with that of the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom labour force in the month of February amounted to more than 23 million. There were registered as unemployed in the United Kingdom only 450,000, and of these, 431,000 were wholly unemployed and 19,000 temporarily stopped from work. That unemployment figure in Britain of 450,000 represents 2 per cent of the labour force of that country. Our labour force in Canada is 6,218,000—

**The Chairman:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but he is certainly not abiding by the ruling of the Chair. I do not know if I can convince him further of the validity of the ruling or its meaning, but I have here for his guidance a reference in May which has just been brought to my notice:

The administrative action of a department is open to debate, but the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in committee of supply.