

*Unemployment Insurance Act*

government were to say, "We will limit the ceiling to \$900 million," and if we were then to move a motion at the report stage to delete that clause and provide for a higher ceiling than the one the government wanted, we should probably be doing what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has argued should be done. So, on that basis I say we are really not dealing with the payment of moneys for a specific government purpose. We are dealing with the question of loans, and I ask the Chair to look at my argument in that light.

The citations mentioned so far have dealt with moneys being spent or bills which have been brought in to deal with actual expenditures by the government. I think the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) mentioned Citation 251. May I mention Citation 270(1), which reads:

A private member may move that certain specified taxes be readjusted and that the scope of tax exemptions be enlarged . . .

That seems to me to involve not the same principle, but to permit a similar situation in that there may be a change in the incidence of certain measures proposed by the government. Citation 276(4) reads:

The House can make amendments which diminish the amount of reduction of taxation, or postpone the day when the reduction takes place, . . .

If the House can, without calling upon the government to take the initiative first, move an amendment which diminishes the amount of taxation, I argue by analogy that we can also move an amendment which diminishes the actual amount which the government seeks to use as advances.

Under the government proposal the government would, if the bill were to pass in its present form, be able to advance in the next year \$3 billion; judging from the way things are going, that is a very plausible figure. In other words, the government could well advance \$3 billion to the unemployment insurance fund. We say, no, not that much. We ought to come back to parliament and debate the matter if we want to lift the ceiling that has been set. I fail to see how that action would in any way interfere with the initiative of the Crown and, within the meaning of Citation 246(3), interfere with the rule that a bill such as the one brought in by the government deals once and for all not only with the amount involved but also with the objective for which that amount is provided. We are not interfering with that objective. We are not interfering with its purposes; we are not interfering with its conditions and we are not interfering with its qualifications. We are saying that the ceiling should not be as high as proposed until the matter has come to this House and been approved. If we are denied that right, I submit there is not much use in this House dealing with measures of this kind.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Mr. Speaker, I want to deal for a moment with the points raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). Either the hon. member has been here too long, or he is restricting his usually lucid arguments on the rules to give comfort to the government. I am not suggesting he has done this deliberately; but, really, he distorted the submission of the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) when he accused him of trying to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act by

[Mr. Baldwin.]

means of the amendment that he put before the House. He said that he tried to do this by increasing the limit now existing under the Unemployment Insurance Act from \$800 million to \$900 million. I say, not at all, Sir. If the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre were seeing things clearly, he would see that the attempt of the hon. member for Hamilton West is directed entirely, exclusively and solely at amending clause 1 of Bill C-124 which removes entirely the ceiling from the existing act. The hon. member for Hamilton West is not trying to increase the limit under the existing act but to limit the limitless ceiling with this amendment involving section 137. All this will become clear as I go along.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has tried to erect a straw man when comparing the amendment and bill before us with a supply bill. He tried to knock down the amendment on the basis that it might be proper if it related to a supply bill but that it is not proper with respect to the bill before parliament. The hon. member for Hamilton West tried, as he made clear in his argument, through his amendment to retain that parliamentary control over appropriations, which would disappear entirely if the ceiling of \$800 million were allowed to be lifted, as proposed. This is what will happen if Bill C-124, in its present form passes. If C-124 passes in its present form without amendment, there would be no ceiling and there would be no parliamentary control. Actually, that would be putting a blank cheque into the hands of the government, and would permit the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) to make as he pleases advances from time to time to the fund. There would be no restrictions whatsoever on the hundreds of millions of dollars or, indeed, billions of dollars, potentially, that could be advanced without a yea or nay from parliament.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre asserts that the bill in its present form enables the government to give effect to the law now on the statute books concerning unemployment insurance by giving the Minister of Finance power to make the necessary advances and make available unemployment insurance benefits. That is what the hon. member asserts. I say, Sir, that Bill C-124 as it now stands goes far beyond the position asserted by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. It does not merely enable the government to carry into effect the provisions of the act as that now stands; it enables the government to go to limitless horizons in supplying moneys for the purpose of paying unemployment insurance benefits.

My hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre referred to Citation 251(1) and cites, in support of his argument, the fact that we do not have a bill before us to provide for expenditures. Those, I believe, are his words paraphrased. Actually, there is before the House a bill to provide for expenditures. We have before us a bill to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act and that bill, if passed, would authorize the government to make limitless expenditures for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of the act for making certain payments. We have heard, in two standing committees, of those variables that can occur and that can increase the demands made upon the Minister of Finance to supply advances under section 137.