

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Pickersgill: I have been wandering some distance from the estimates of the department, and I do not wish to put myself out of order.

Mr. Hees: You are always putting yourself out of order.

Mr. Cardiff: I would like to see you when you are in order.

Mr. Tucker: Wait for silence.

Mr. Pickersgill: Since the Minister of Finance has chosen to call into question the providence and foresight of the previous government in respect to this particular item in the estimates now before the committee, and since the Acting Minister of Citizenship and Immigration the other evening—

Mr. Hees: You are running out of steam—a little louder.

Mr. Pickersgill:—suggested or expressed certain suspicions with respect to the conclusions which I had reached last April as to the reasons for issuing a stop order upon open placement visas after July 31, which is directly relevant to this matter because it is, as the minister himself said, the volume of this movement which was responsible for the warrant in the first place and for the vote in the second place,—

Mr. Fulton: No, I did not say that.

Mr. Pickersgill: Well, the things which the hon. minister said certainly sounded like that and it would be very hard to construe them in any other way.

Mr. Fulton: If the hon. gentleman will read what was said on January 30 he will find his answer. It was the lapse of authority because of the improvidence of the hon. gentlemen opposite who, when they were in power, did not conclude the agreements with the provinces which would have provided the continuing authority for the expenditure of money.

Mr. Pickersgill: I do not think the hon. gentleman's explanation would cover anything like the whole of this \$8 million. In fact, I feel perfectly confident that it would not.

Mr. Fulton: My hon. friend forgets that he had supplementary estimates of \$9 million by this time, which would have provided it. It was the result of their improvidence and carelessness in not concluding the agreements which would have provided the authority for spending the money—the authority lapsed on March 31.

Mr. Pickersgill: Well, if the hon. gentleman wants to argue that point I will be quite willing to do so at another time—

[Mr. Hees.]

An hon. Member: Argue it now.

Mr. Pickersgill: But I want to clear up this other point upon which there has been a great deal of discussion. The hon. gentleman said the other night as recorded at pages 4068 and 4069 of *Hansard* for January 30:

I suspect that the former minister's order of April 12 was in part at least based upon that forecast or resulted perhaps indirectly but in large part from the forecast that he had received on the basis of the opinion of the economists whose responsibility it is to advise the government as to what the future months will hold and on whose opinion is based estimates of the labour market, amongst other things, in the coming months.

I have since had the opportunity to consider how accurate was the view expressed by the minister and I would like for a moment, since after all it is my administration of the department that is being called into question, to give to the committee an idea of the kind of forecasts which I did consider.

In the first place, the most important consideration in my mind was the volume of immigration, and the second consideration was the known size of the native additions to the labour market. One had also to consider the prospective capacity of the labour market to absorb these people. I had the advantage of the same judgment which was brought to bear on this matter as the minister of finance had when he presented his budget, and I would like to draw the attention of the committee to two short paragraphs in Mr. Harris' budget speech of March 14, 1957, as recorded at page 2216 of *Hansard* for that date. I would particularly like to draw the attention of the minister to this matter because he has said things that were rather misleading about it. Mr. Harris said:

I come now to consider the economic prospects for the coming fiscal year.

This was the kind of consideration we had to take into account in determining the volume of immigration.

On the present evidence I think we can expect a continuation of the current high level of economic activity throughout the coming year.

And that of course was true. In fact, the level of economic activity in 1957, as hon. members will recall, was higher than it was in 1956.

There may, as always, be some unevenness between industries and regions, but by and large I expect the momentum of expansion to continue, at a somewhat more moderate pace but strongly enough to ensure—

I particularly draw attention to the next words—

—at a somewhat more moderate pace but strongly enough to ensure further increasing in production and employment, and a continuation of rising standards of living.