

Interim Supply

fully when they come up subsequently for discussion, when interim supply is requested in a month's time or prior to that time.

In making this statement I should not want to be misunderstood as implying that the official opposition has suddenly discovered any reason for confidence in this government. I hope I shall not be misunderstood on that score. Our position in that regard has not changed. However, we recognize the fact that, like the government, we are a minority in the House of Commons, and that as long as the government can command a majority here its constitutional right to remain in office is combined with its duty to deal with the urgent problems of the country with the least possible delay.

Hence we are prepared to allow this request for interim supply for one month to go through, so far as we are concerned, without any further debate. The government will then have both the opportunity and the obligation without delay to bring before the house, as I say, in the form of a new budget, those long range economic proposals which we have been led to believe for four months would be put before the people to take the place of this emergency austerity program.

(Translation):

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Chairman, to hear the Leader of the Opposition, one would think that when the Liberals were in power, the budget was tabled at the same time as the speech from the throne was delivered or during the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne. He is faster in the opposition than he ever was when he was a member of the government.

We were told a while ago that if the house so wishes, there would probably be a general debate on the supplementary revised estimates which were presented yesterday.

At this time, a request for interim supply for a period of one month is being submitted to us. Even if we were to discuss it during a whole month, it is obvious that we would still have to pay the country's bills for that month and keep the government services going. Consequently, any discussion on that subject is useless.

The general debate will take place Monday and Tuesday, we hope, and all the parties will have the opportunity at that time to put forth their program and to discuss important economic questions. But, for the time being, we support entirely the request of the minister for voting the estimates required for the services of Canada and we will not delay the house any further, because we wish to proceed with more urgent matters for the progress of Canada.

[Mr. Pearson.]

(Text):

Mr. Berger: Mr. Chairman, we in this corner of the house are anxious that the business of the nation should continue to be transacted. We are therefore willing to vote the government supply for another month. In doing so, however, we wish to urge upon the government the necessity for some effective action immediately with regard to the unemployment crisis with which Canada is faced at the present time and which is more than likely to deepen this winter unless something is done about it.

This is the first opportunity I have had, as a new member, to participate in one of the debates in this House of Commons. I think I could not expect any gratitude from my constituents if I were to talk about the people and places of interest in Vancouver-Burrard. Rather I think they would expect me to try to get parliament to do something about the economic disaster in Canada and about galloping unemployment, and also to do something to turn scarcity into abundance.

During the time I have been here I, like other hon. members, have been treated to the spectacle of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition arguing aimlessly at great length, or undue length, in the opinion of many members of the house, about things that we ought to have disposed of some time ago. They have been arguing about which of them was responsible for the decline in Canada's prestige and which of them was responsible for the dollar crisis. Each of them has invoked the shade of Mackenzie King to support his case. In fact, when the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition were grappling with each other during the debate on the speech from the throne, many of us thought their speeches sounded so much alike that they must have been using the same speech writer.

This government thus far has not indicated that it is prepared to grapple with the problem of unemployment. The speech from the throne did not even mention the word "unemployment" although we have had hundreds of thousands of Canadians unemployed this year. I think we can look forward, not with any anticipation but with regret, to a winter during which there will be perhaps even one million unemployed. Yet the Prime Minister and his ministers are not prepared even to discuss unemployment. They are talking a different language from the rest of us.

In the speech from the throne the government stated that economic activity in Canada had moved ahead sharply. It may have done so, but many of us did not see it. The fact