

Interim Supply Bill

It does seem to me that this is the thin end of the wedge. The government is asking for something that I have never seen in my ten years of parliament. I have never seen interim supply of one-third granted to any government. I suggest to the minister that he leave the matter as we originally agreed, which is the agreement normally made by the parties in the house to facilitate government business, that is, allow one-sixth of the estimates. I may point out to the minister that there has been a good deal of argument and a great deal of debate as to whether we should allow to the government even one-sixth, having regard to the circumstances. I have argued on many occasions that even in war time perhaps only one-twelfth should be granted. We have been asked to agree to one-sixth, but in connection with one or two items the government seeks to increase that to a third. If it were a question of holding up the government on their expenditures it would be a different thing, but that is not involved. All it means is that it may be a little more inconvenient for the government, and that it provides perhaps another opportunity for the opposition to raise some questions on matters of public importance when these items are brought in again because the house is now in session.

The house will be in session for the next two months. If the government find that this appropriation is not enough to cover the exigencies of the circumstances, they can then come back and ask for more. I think on reflection the minister will not wish to change what has been a regularized practice, the voting of one-sixth to cover all items. Personally I am not satisfied that we should go any further, because the next time—I am not suggesting that this is the sin of any government in particular—they may want more. When you give a government an inch, they want a mile. In this case we do not want to give them that inch.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Like the opposition.

Mr. GRAYDON: There are some oppositions that look like governments and I take that compliment as being well meant. I think on reflection the minister will understand that I am not attempting to place a stumbling block in his way. But I do not want to set a precedent which in the days to come we might have to overcome. The time to stop it is before it begins.

Mr. COLDWELL: I agree with what the acting leader of the opposition has said. Unless the Minister of Finance can advance some better reason than that which he has

[Mr. Graydon.]

given, I do not think the vote should be increased. If the house were not sitting I could understand that we might be justified in doing what he suggests. The minister may have in his mind some very urgent reasons why we should do it, but unless he can give some reasons more urgent than the ones we have heard already I shall be in agreement with the acting leader of the opposition in saying that we should stick to the one-sixth.

Mr. ILSLEY: I do not want to spend too much time over this. I spoke to the leader of the opposition and told him that I would want more than one-sixth of two items, and I understood it would be all right. I made the mistake in not speaking to my hon. friend who has made such a powerful speech. I want to assure him that this is not something extraordinary. Nearly every year there are some items on which we ask for more than we are asking for generally. I have been held up several times just on that point. I have sought a twelfth or a sixth, as the case may be, and then there were certain supply items on which I would want more. It is all right, though. I may want to come back in a month's time—

Mr. GRAYDON: That will do you no harm.

Mr. ILSLEY: Except that it will mean another afternoon and evening taken up.

Mr. GRAYDON: I think it is the proper thing to do.

Mr. ILSLEY: It is to save time that I am asking for one-sixth instead of one-twelfth. As I said before, we have two \$10,000,000 items here that are elastic. Last year the whole three billion dollars was elastic. But now we are moving from one system to another, which the house wanted us to do, and it would make it safer if we could have a little more than one-sixth of these two items to work on. It would obviate the necessity of coming back earlier than we otherwise would have to do. But it is just as the committee says.

Mr. GRAYDON: It would perhaps remove the minister's difficulties and ours if these two particular items were taken up early in committee of supply and adopted after due debate. This would obviate the necessity of asking for interim supply again so far as these particular items are concerned.

Mr. ILSLEY: You would have to have a bill based on those two items.

Mr. HOWE: I am particularly interested in the second item No. 611.