

Government Monetary Policy

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): There is no point of order. The hon. member for Essex East is engaging in his old tactics again.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): My hon. friend keeps lecturing me, but I am going to tell the hon. gentleman that I will take my lecturing only from the Speaker and not from him. My hon. friend says, Mr. Speaker, that we have decided to discuss monetary questions. Will the minister deny that this house was assured by the Prime Minister and by the house leader that we would call the labour estimates tonight and discuss them tomorrow and have a general discussion on unemployment?

Mr. Bell (Carleton): That is nonsense.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That was a solemn commitment made by the government.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Essex East may have a point to argue, but certainly it was not a point of order.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, I was going to come to that. It was a prickly conscience that prompted the hon. member for Essex East to rise to his feet and attempt to raise a point of order. The hon. gentleman talked about a solemn commitment. There was no such thing. The hon. member has completely overstated the facts. I shall deal with that. I am going to deal very fully with that subject.

I have said that the remark made by the hon. member for Kootenay West was a very apt remark for any hon. member of this house to have made under the circumstances. We have had on numerous occasions from the official opposition, and not least of all from the voluble hon. member for Essex East, assertions that there is an unemployment crisis, a national emergency.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): There is no doubt about it.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): We have had this dinned into us for days. It was only last Wednesday, February 15, that the hon. member for Essex East himself sought to bring this matter forward for discussion on a motion to adjourn the house. It will be found on page 2067 of *Hansard* of that date. The hon. gentleman asked leave to move the adjournment of the house under standing order 26, and I quote the hon. gentleman's words—

—for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely the addition of 165,000 persons to the ranks of the unemployed during the past month.

After you had ruled against the motion to adjourn the house for this purpose, the Leader of the Opposition, as reported at

[**Mr. Martin (Essex East):**.]

page 2069 of *Hansard* addressed a question to the Prime Minister, in these words:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he would request the house to give unanimous approval to the calling, immediately, of the estimates of the Department of Labour, so that we can discuss without any delay the serious unemployment situation.

That was the situation last Wednesday. There was a great enthusiasm and a great zeal on the part of the hon. gentlemen opposite to discuss unemployment. The official opposition was given a full opportunity yesterday to call the tune in respect to the subject matter of debate, an uninhibited opportunity. Let me remind the house of what the Prime Minister said by way of rejoinder to the Leader of the Opposition on the occasion to which I referred. The hon. gentleman said:

Mr. Speaker, there will be a supply motion on Monday, when every opportunity will be given to hon. gentlemen to speak on this subject if it is within the rules of the house so to do. If that motion is passed, and if the house so wills, among the estimates to be called will be those of the Department of Labour.

When the motion that I introduced yesterday to resolve the house into committee of supply is passed, as I trust it will be this evening, among the several departments the estimates of which will be called will be the Department of Labour. Let us examine what the hon. member for Essex East has added to this. The hon. gentleman said that there was a commitment to go on in committee of supply tomorrow.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): No, no.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): There was no such thing, Mr. Speaker. The subject was not even discussed. I say this, that when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson) yesterday in his remarks sought to create this impression he had no basis in fact whatever for doing so. I was very interested in what the Leader of the Opposition had to say yesterday by way of trying to excuse himself for ducking, for sidetracking, for sidestepping a debate on unemployment. It was a completely deliberate choice on his part. Note the way in which he put his remarks in this respect. His statement is to be found at page 2198 of *Hansard* and it is a fine example of ambiguity. He said:

The Prime Minister told us last week—

Obviously he was referring to the incident to which I have just alluded in *Hansard*.

—that the labour estimates would be called tomorrow, so we have a right to expect a general debate on other aspects of the unemployment problem without delay, perhaps on Wednesday of this week.

Whether or not the Leader of the Opposition intended it, Mr. Speaker, I think that probably most people reading that sentence would