

Interim Supply

basis of a democratic parliament, I cannot conceive of the Minister of Finance, having said so much about democracy and the rights of parliament, telling us that parliament must accept that without discussion or right to speak on all phases of the expenditures. It has—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That is not what I said at all.

Mr. Winch: It has always been our right to discuss all estimates under the interim supply motion.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That is not what I said at all.

The Chairman: I must say first that the standing orders, Beauchesne or May, are not really specific on the point of order. However, I will draw the attention of the committee first of all to rule 59(2) which states as follows:

Speeches in committee of the whole house must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under consideration.

In respect of the point raised by the hon. member for Essex East and citation 234 from Beauchesne, I will draw his attention to rule 56(1) which states as follows:

On Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, when the order of the day is called for the house to go into committee of supply, Mr. Speaker shall leave the Chair without question put—

Grievances can be raised before Mr. Speaker leaves the chair.

Mr. Mariin (Essex East): Oh, no.

The Chairman: If I understand rightly the system of the six supply motions which are provided for in the rules, these are exactly the six special occasions on which grievances may be raised. It seems to me that it is a general rule that we can draw from the practice and tradition of the House of Commons of Canada and of the British parliament that there should be in general no repetition of debates, that only matters may be discussed which the several occasions provide for and when they do. If I were to accept the view of the hon. member for Essex East, I can hardly see where we could draw the line between the debate on which we seem to be embarking and the budget debate. It would be as wide and it could even take more time than the budget debate which, by the rules, is limited to eight days.

I do not wish to draw any definite line as to what can and cannot be discussed at this stage. But I would certainly think that when we are considering interim supply the most important question would be whether or not these supplies should be granted. Of course, if there is any reference to the policies of

the government in order not to vote the supply, I would think that general reference can be made. But I think the hon. member for Essex East was going into too much detail on the question of unemployment, because if I were to let him discuss this item, anybody could choose any item of the administration and we would never finish.

May I also point out to the committee that opportunities have offered themselves up to now for discussion of the question of unemployment, and we shall also have occasion to discuss it when the budget debate starts and when the estimates of the Department of Labour are before the committee of supply.

Therefore, I do not feel that I deprive any hon. member of his right to discuss this question in ruling that I consider out of order at that time references in detail to the unemployment situation.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, may I call your attention to a situation which is almost exactly parallel to the one we find ourselves in now and which must be very much in the mind of the Minister of Finance because he was present and took part in the debate. I refer to *Hansard* for June 22, 1956, pages 5288 and following. The leader of the opposition of that time, Mr. Drew, on a motion for interim supply which aroused some discussion, is reported as having said:

Mr. Chairman, every subject which can be dealt with by this parliament can now be properly dealt with on the motion for interim supply.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That view was not upheld.

Mr. Pearson: That view was upheld by the chairman of that day, and Mr. Drew went on to talk about the position of the Speaker of that time and everything else under the sun. He was followed by Mr. Hees, Mr. Dinsdale and Mr. Diefenbaker, and their remarks extended for some 15 or 20 pages in *Hansard*. No one on the government side at that time questioned their right to do that.

The Chairman: Was there a ruling made at that time by the Chair.

Mr. Pearson: There was a ruling made, and Mr. Drew was permitted to proceed.

The Chairman: But in what terms was the ruling made? I do not consider, if debate occurred on a previous occasion but no ruling was made, that this is a precedent which would tie us at this time, because silence in such case is, to me, not very helpful.

Mr. Benidickson: May I speak to the point of order?

Mr. Argue: Mr. Chairman, it is probably the best established rule in British parliamentary tradition that members have the right