

Interim Supply

interim supply in a month's time and in the light of what progress is being made, or not being made, during that month; perhaps even in the light of a budget, which we have a right to expect the government to produce.

Since the revised estimates were tabled yesterday we on this side have not, of course, had much opportunity to examine all the implications of the reductions which have been made in those estimates as compared with the estimates tabled by the former minister of finance in the last session of the previous parliament. Especially we have not had much opportunity to consider the possible effect of those reductions on employment, a matter which is very much in all our minds as we approach the winter. We have not had time to do that, but we do not complain about it; because we have an opportunity now to make an examination of this kind, and we shall be in a position to discuss the changes and their implications on the next occasion when the minister appears before us to ask for interim supply, if indeed an opportunity does not present itself before then.

When I spoke in the debate on the address on October 1 I indicated that if the house should reject the motion of want of confidence being put forward at that time, as well as subsequent similar motions moved during that debate, this would mean that the government would have a mandate at least to introduce its legislative and other proposals. I also indicated at that time, and I repeat it now, that each of those proposals would be considered on its merits by the official opposition in exactly the same way as if the government had a clear majority in this house. That did not mean then, and it does not mean now, that we were, or are, giving approval in advance to any measure or action taken by the government. It did mean we would give each measure objective consideration in the light of the public interest.

We recognize that there are economic and financial problems affecting the livelihood and the welfare of the Canadian people which need to be dealt with urgently. We recall that the Prime Minister during the summer stated that longer term economic measures would be brought forward by the government when parliament met in September. He was contrasting those measures with emergency measures. Now that the government has received its vote of confidence it has no excuse for any delay in bringing forward these really urgent proposals. The best way to do that, of course, is by a new budget, so we look forward to receiving these long range economic and financial proposals at an early date. As each measure is brought forward we shall, of course, exercise to the full our constitutional

rights as an opposition; by supporting those proposals which we consider to be good, by seeking to amend those proposals which we think we can make better, and by opposing those which we believe to be bad.

I repeat, we sincerely hope the government will shortly bring forward its urgent and important economic proposals. We hope it will not ask this house to deal first with a lot of legislation, some of it already on the order paper, which, though it may have a specialized importance, does not get down to the roots of our real problems in this country—the means of ensuring adequate economic growth necessary for full employment and national progress. We have the right to assume that the government has these economic proposals ready. Are we to take it that these proposals are not yet ready when the government, which has presumably been working on them, asks us to believe that in only four days it had worked out and put into effect an emergency austerity program which involved surcharges on dozens of categories of imports; with graduated surcharges of 5 per cent, 10 per cent and 15 per cent, with all the exemptions that had to be worked out also and with all the regulations that go with that kind of operation? The government asks us to believe that it put into effect in four days a program of cuts of this kind; that during those four days it went to the international monetary fund and to the export-import bank raising loans amounting to \$1 billion; that it had made reciprocal currency arrangements with the United Kingdom and the federal reserve bank; that during those four days it had found a legal basis for this action, and had obtained an opinion on that score from the Department of Justice.

May I say, Mr. Chairman, that a government which can do all that in four days in order to deal with an emergency that suddenly boiled up at the beginning of those four days has, I am sure, a long range, far reaching economic and financial program to put before this House of Commons, so we expect to get it without delay. The best way in which to get it, of course, is in the form of a new budget.

In order that there will be no excuse for any delay in this matter of bringing forward these long range financial and economic proposals the official opposition, as I have said, has decided to let interim supply go through without further debate so far as we are concerned. However, we are only one of the minority parties in this House of Commons. Therefore if this debate does begin we shall naturally feel relieved from any obligation not to prolong the discussion, just as we reserve now our right to debate these matters