

Interim Supply

voted in those estimates for a total of \$11,844,583.34 and (i) an additional one-third of votes 605 and 606, shown in schedule F to the bill, for a total of \$541,666.67, the grand total being \$1,045,379,927.94.

The proportions requested in this bill are intended to provide for the necessary requirements of the public service during August, September and October, 1961. In no instance is the total amount of an item being released by this bill. The form of the bill is the same as that of similar interim supply bills passed previously. The passing of this bill will not prejudice the rights and privileges of members to criticize any item in the estimates when it comes up for consideration in committee of supply and the usual undertaking is hereby given that such rights and privileges will be respected and will not be curtailed or restricted in any way as the result of the passing of this measure.

Mr. Benidickson: Mr. Chairman, I take it that this motion is made on the basis that parliament may not be sitting within the period contemplated by the motion although I imagine that perhaps it might be reconvened earlier. I only wish to say that an unusual procedure has been adopted. The leader of the house, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, is representing the Minister of Finance today. To me this seems unusual.

Mr. Churchill: It is for a very temporary period.

Mr. Benidickson: I would have expected that the very competent parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance would have made these comments in the absence of his minister. As I heard the minister, the reservations as to the rights of members of parliament with respect to every item in the book of estimates are the same reservations that have always been given on interim supply. Do I have the assurance of the Minister of Veterans Affairs?

Mr. Churchill: That is correct.

Mr. Benidickson: On that basis we have no quarrel with this measure. Under some votes extraordinary expenditures are required in the next two or three months and in those instances the percentage of the total amount now being asked for is somewhat greater. In other words, no over-all average percentage applies to all the items for which interim supply is being requested. That course has our entire approval. So far as the possibility of adjournment is concerned, it was indicated clearly yesterday by the hon. member for Essex East that we on this side were prepared to sit here as long as the government

[Mr. Churchill.]

was prepared to advance matters of current necessity and emergency. That was discussed yesterday.

Mr. Argue: Mr. Chairman, this is the 157th sitting day of this session.

Mr. Brunsdon: Are you tired?

Mr. Argue: I believe this is the longest session in the history of the country. We assembled in November ostensibly to begin a session that would be concluded in the early summer but as time has gone on it has become obvious that the session could not be concluded even by mid-summer. The government will, of course, have its own reasons for saying that the session has been unduly delayed. I think the main reason why the session has continued so long is the fact that the government is an incompetent government that has failed to meet the many urgent economic problems facing the people of this country and today this government does not have the confidence of the people of the country. It has failed in every way to deal with every single economic problem facing the people of the country.

Mr. Brunsdon: Mr. Chairman, on a question of privilege, the hon. member is making a political speech—

The Acting Chairman (Mr. McCleave): The hon. member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Argue: There is widespread unemployment, inadequate agricultural prices, failure to provide a social security system even though the government's commitments in this regard are clear and failure to bring forward financial and economic policies to improve economic conditions. I would say that at this time Canada is probably the most mismanaged country in the world, the most incompetently mismanaged country in the world.

The government is in great trouble because it has failed to be consistent. It has failed to take a straightforward course and has used devious, underhanded methods to deal with situations instead of dealing with them straightforwardly as an honourable government should do in a democratic society.

We are asked this afternoon to provide interim supply for August, September and October. There is no indication when the government wishes parliament to resume. They are asking for three months' interim supply when all reports today have been that parliament would reassemble in September. The government has run into serious trouble in the economic field. It has run into serious trouble in the management of events in the House of Commons.