

Labour Conditions—Unemployment

Mr. Martin (Essex East): With great respect, I think the argument of urgency must lie in the facts as they seem to present themselves to us, but I do not intend to labour that point. However, we now have in our possession, as of a few hours ago, a further report from the Department of Labour and the dominion bureau of statistics which indicates that despite government assurances with regard to unemployment in this country the situation is not improving and in the result, when we add up the national figure on the basis of the categories of unemployed included in the dominion bureau of statistics figures, a very serious situation confronts the country. The urgency lies in the fact that the problem continues, as the monthly bulletin indicates, to be as severe as it was in the preceding month. That situation confronting us at this moment when we are about to recess for a period of ten days warrants, I submit with great respect and confidence, the house giving consideration at this time to ways and means by which the government could deal with this problem.

This matter has not been pursued by way of specific motion during this session. There was an amendment on going into supply providing that the government should give consideration to calling a dominion-provincial conference so that this question and fiscal matters could be discussed, but both fiscal and unemployment questions were referred to in that amendment as the kind of question which would justify the holding of such a conference, and the kind of question that might be discussed at that conference.

I submit there is no problem of greater emergency in our country at this time than the fact that we have almost half a million people out of work. This problem persists in spite of government policy and in spite of government assurances of amelioration. I would urge upon Your Honour the consideration that if ever there was a motion that came within the terms of standing order 26 it is this particular motion, which justifies our asking the government to give an opportunity at this time of examining its policies and finding why there is no improvement in a situation that affects so many thousands of our people in all parts of Canada. The new fact has emerged that as a result of statistics introduced in another parliament in the commonwealth we have learned that Canada has a higher measure of unemployment than any other—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Hon. Howard C. Green (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My hon. friend is simply going ahead to make his speech. I point out that the

rules are perfectly clear. Standing order 26, subsection 6, paragraph (c) provides:

26. 6(c) the motion must not revive discussion on a matter which has been discussed in the same session.

The original amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition during the course of the debate on the speech from the throne on January 19, as reported at page 52 of *Hansard*, was in the following words:

We respectfully affirm that Your Excellency's advisers, by reason of contradictory and confused policies; as well as lamentable indecision in dealing with grave national problems such, for example, as those concerned with mounting unemployment, no longer merit the confidence of this house.

In addition there was a subamendment moved by the hon. member for Kootenay West, to a motion to go into supply, as reported at page 871 of *Hansard* of February 10, in the following words:

That the amendment be amended by changing the period at the end thereof to a comma, and by adding thereafter the following words:

"and should present for consideration of such conference federal proposals:

(a) to assume complete responsibility for the welfare of the employable unemployed.

(b) to ensure employment opportunities to all Canadians willing and able to work—

The motion made today by the hon. member for Essex East contains these words:

—which has not shown any significant decrease.

My hon. friend has reference to the general unemployment situation. If the hon. gentleman can move to adjourn the house on the basis of figures which happen to have been published today, then he could move to adjourn the house every day that figures are brought down; for instance, two weeks from now or four weeks from now and so on right through the session. I submit that this rule is intended to prevent this type of development.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister of Public Works has raised a point of order which I have heard. I believe I have heard all I need to hear from that hon. gentleman or any hon. member of the house for that matter, because it is quite clear to me that this is not a motion that can be sustained.

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I desire to address myself to the question of whether or not this is a motion of urgency and whether or not there exists a situation which is different from that which might obtain had action been taken by the government.

On that question only I should like to draw to your attention the fact that this is a matter of urgency because the house now has information it did not have before. It is only within the last few hours that it has been