

However, when we drew the rule that way we made the special provision that, although estimates could be dealt with in the House without any debate, nevertheless there had to be provision for voting, if hon. members so wished.

We also felt that it would be ridiculous to call every item in the estimates and spend all night voting, and we felt that members should be given the right, by putting down notices of opposition, to call for a vote on any particular items in the estimates, main, supplementary or interim. That was the entire purpose of the provision for notices of opposition, so that when Mr. Speaker cuts off debate and calls for the vote, the House can vote on the individual items to which hon. members have indicated their opposition. This is spelled out in Standing Order 58(10) which reads as follows:

On the last allotted day in each period, but, in any case, not later than the last sitting day in each period, at fifteen minutes before the ordinary time of daily adjournment, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings then in progress and, if those proceedings are not in relation to a no-confidence motion, he shall put forth with successively, without debate or amendment, every question necessary to dispose of any item of business relating to interim supply, main estimates, and supplementary or final estimates, the restoration or reinstatement of any item in the estimates—

And now come the words that are significant today:

—or any opposed item in the estimates,—

The Standing Order goes on to say:

—and for the passage of all stages of any bill or bills based thereon. If the motion under consideration at the hour of interruption is a no-confidence motion, the Speaker first shall put forth with, without further debate or amendment, every question necessary to dispose of that proceeding, and forthwith thereafter put successively, without debate or amendment, every question necessary to dispose of any item of business relating to interim supply, main estimates, and supplementary or final estimates, the restoration or reinstatement of any item in the estimates,—

And again we come to the phrase that is significant today:

—or any opposed item in the estimates,—

I continue with the quotation:

—and, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 72, for the passage at all stages of any bill or bills based thereon. The standing order relating to the ordinary time of daily adjournment shall remain suspended until all such questions have been decided.

I point out, Sir, that except for a reference in Standing Order 58(4) to the filing of a notice to oppose any item in the estimates, that is the only place in our rules where there is a reference to notices of opposition.

I point out, Sir, that certain conditions must obviously be met if opposed items are to be considered. In the first place, such opposed items can be considered either on the last allotted day in a period or semester, or on the last sitting day in such period or semester. This day is neither of those. This day is neither the last allotted day in a period or semester nor the last sitting day of the semester. We are not now operating under that rule at all.

• (1520)

The other thing I would point out is that the operation of the rules with respect to notices of opposition to items in the main estimates applies only when the Speaker is required to put questions without any opportunity for

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debate. I think we were wise in putting that device into the rules. It is very specific. It is only when those two conditions are met; (a) that it is the last day of the period or the last allotted day and (b) that we are operating under a system by which the Speaker puts the question without any opportunity for debate. It is only under those circumstances that there is any provision in the rules for using the device of putting down notices of opposition to items in the estimates.

Because those conditions are not met, because we are operating under Standing Order 58(18), these notices of opposition which are inscribed on the notice paper should not be considered at this time. We are operating under Standing Order 58(18). That has not been said as yet, but it is obvious to everyone.

Standing Order 58(18) provides that when there is an urgent necessity to deal with estimates, the government does not have to wait until we have had all of the allotted days in a period and do it in that normal way without debate, but it can at any time bring in a supply bill. However, if it does so, it must be treated as a government order and given all the treatment that goes with a government order. Perhaps I should put Standing Order 58(18) on the record. It reads as follows:

In the event of urgency in relation to any estimate or estimates, the proceedings of the House on a motion to concur therein and on the subsequent bill are to be taken under Government Orders and not on days allotted in this order.

When something is done under Standing Order 58(18) and a supply bill becomes a government order, there is no such thing as Mr. Speaker saying there is no debate. There is no time limit. The bill is treated as a normal government bill. Once it is introduced, it will have second reading which is debatable, followed by a reference to Committee of the Whole House where it is debatable both with respect to its various clauses and the schedule or schedules attached thereto and, finally, on third reading. There is no limitation in the rules. There is no provision to deny or cut off debate. If I may resort to simple logic, it would be ridiculous to import into a setup where we have debate a rule that is applied only when there is no debate.

For these reasons and one or two other comments I wish to make, Mr. Speaker, I suggest we should not proceed today by dealing with these nine notices of opposition. Rather, we should operate under the rule that says a report from a Standing Committee on Estimates shall be dealt with without debate and then, when the bill is brought in, we should proceed in the normal way which, as I say, includes freedom of debate and no time limit in order to deal with it.

I go a step further and suggest that if this practice, which as I say is not provided for at all, were followed, certain points of confusion would arise. For example, would these notices of opposition be debatable as is implied because we are under Standing Order 58(18) where there is no prohibition against debate or would it be required that they be voted on without debate as is set out in the only section of the rules that deals with notices of opposition, namely Standing Order 58(10)? What are we under, 58(18) or 58(10)? Are we under Standing Order 58(18) where there is debate or 58(10) where there is no debate?