

increase in the number of the UNTAG troops up to the figure that had been agreed upon some several years ago. That was a provision that proved to be acceptable to all members of the Security Council.

We are not here debating history. Surely, our preoccupation has to be how do we repair a peace operation that is going badly in Namibia now? The preoccupation of this Government has been to try to get more troops in quickly. We have already urged more deployment. We have already indicated that in addition to the Canadians who are already there we are prepared to send Canadian troops in more quickly, if that would be helpful. We are looking at other ways in which we and other countries which are participating in UNTAG might help to speed up the deployment.

This is a serious problem. It should not be treated trivially or for partisan reasons in this House. Surely we all have a determination and obligation here to try to make the UN peace plan in Namibia effective, a plan on which Canadians have worked so long.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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• (1500)

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

RAFFERTY-ALAMEDA DAM CONSTRUCTION PROJECT—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: Earlier today, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg Transcona (Mr. Blaikie) applied to the Chair for an emergency debate involving a proposed operation on the Rafferty-Alameda part of the Province of Saskatchewan. His concern was, of course, that some people have wanted a federal environmental assessment review project done before construction begins. It is of course a matter of interest and concern to all Members of the House that I have to say to the Hon. Member that it does not come within the proper terms of the rule for an emergency debate, at least not at this time. I also want to say to the Hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Lewis) that I indicated that as a consequence of his request to the Chair earlier today, I would come back to the House at an appropriate time and discuss very briefly the guidelines that exist for the introduction of an emergency debate, and I will do that, but I would prefer to do it perhaps later this week.

I should advise Hon. Members that I have a joint application on a question of privilege from the Hon.

Privilege—Mr. Milliken

Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) and the Hon. Member for Kingston and the The Islands (Mr. Milliken). I will hear the Hon. Member for Kingston and The Islands.

PRIVILEGE

GRANTING OF SUPPLY

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, to say that I am pleased to rise on this question of privilege today would not be accurate, but I feel it is incumbent on me to raise this issue before the House because I think it is a very serious question of privilege that affects the rights of all Hon. Members. To state the point very succinctly, it is my position that our privileges as Members have been breached in that we have been denied our ancient right to grant or withhold supply.

I say that, Mr. Speaker, because this is a right that is held by all Hon. Members of this House of Commons, and it is one that has been held from the very earliest times. Over hundreds of years, Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary system has evolved a series of rules for dealing with the business of supply and the right of the House to control that business.

The law in this regard is clearly stated in the Financial Administration Act, and I would like to read, Mr. Speaker, Section 26 of that Act which states the following:

Subject to the Constitution Act, 1867 to 1982, no payment shall be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund without the authority of Parliament.

The right of Parliament to control finances of the country have been undoubted and has been written upon by many of the learned writers on parliamentary law. I would like to cite a couple of the authorities. I refer to Bourinot's Second Edition, and I am using an older edition because I want to indicate the ancient nature of this right. On page 543 the author states:

The principal purpose of the House of Commons, in fact, is the consideration and criticism of the estimates and the taxes required to meet the public expenditures; and the committees in question—

Here he is talking about the committee of Supply and the committee of Ways and Means.

—and the committees in question are the parliamentary machinery by means of which the House chiefly exercises its political and constitutional functions.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more fundamental to the operation of this House than the business of supply.