

seat and move this type of amendment so that we can get on with the business of the House.

We are as concerned with this issue, Mr. Chairman, as are members of the government, but it would appear that progress on the government reorganization bill will be slow because the government started out by mixing apples and oranges, that is, mixing all types of government changes. They put a small amount of sugar on the cake when they named the department of the environment, and of course there are no members on this side who would not like to see our environment cleaned up. We are well aware of what has happened as a result of the pollution of our environment, and we in Atlantic Canada are perhaps suffering more than any other section of the country.

For these reasons, I am pleased to endorse the point of order of the hon. member for St. John's East, and I hope my comments will help you, Mr. Chairman, in reaching a decision on this very important matter.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure if I can support the point of order that has been raised. However, I am sure it will be of some concern to you, Mr. Chairman, because it indicates how far away we have come from the previous procedures of the House.

Mr. McGrath: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has to take a lot of the blame.

Mr. Peters: Many of us have to take the blame.

Mr. McGrath: That is why he is so quiet.

Mr. Peters: But I am sure that, under normal circumstances, it would be ridiculous to table the estimates of a number of departments, the names of which we proposed to change, while we were still in the position of discussing what we were going to do with these departments. Normally, a government would be willing to make some kind of arrangement. A minister would be able to say that he would accept the idea of having, for example, a department of the environment, plus forestry, plus fisheries. But that is not the way it is done any more. The civil service in this country is so strong now that it is probable the decision to make this change in the estimates was made eight or nine months ago, and now the minister is in no position to make a decision for his colleagues as to whether or not he could accept this amendment.

The point I am making is that you, Mr. Chairman, have a responsibility which I do not envy because if we, as individual Members of Parliament, have any role to play, if there is any point in our discussing the organization bill, it should be to bring forth ideas from various parts of Canada which are affected and to put forth as strongly as possible the views of the people whom we represent. Sometimes, although not often, we were able to make our points strongly enough so that cabinet members saw some merit in them. Unfortunately, I am of the opinion that we have now reached the stage at which the cabinet members cannot make the decision, even if they agree with us. The decision is made some place else. There are 100 or 200 smart young boys who run around making

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these decisions to throw in pollution or environment, and the parliamentary process is no longer able to reverse them.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Peters: I am sure the minister does not have such contempt for Parliament that he would decide to stop the filibuster by bringing in the estimates which annihilate the whole argument because a decision has already been reached. It is surprising that we are now faced with a *fait accompli*. Nowadays, Parliament is continually being faced with a *fait accompli*. One of my colleagues said that these situations did not arise during the Diefenbaker years when his government had a majority. The reason is very simple. The right hon. member for Prince Albert understood Parliament and understood the parliamentary process.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Peters: He could make a decision. So could other former cabinet ministers, such as C. D. Howe who made a snap decision on a piece of legislation that was before the House. He made the decision during the recess between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., so when the members reassembled he said "we do not intend to proceed with the bill". He recognized the validity of the point that was being made and decided that the government would not proceed with the bill.

Today no cabinet minister can make such a decision. Every member here is wondering whether or not there is any point in moving a motion to change anything in the reorganization bill when we can see that the decision is a *fait accompli*, when we know that some smart young fellow made the decision six months ago, as is shown by the estimates. I do not say that the decision was made by departmental heads, because I have known the mandarins of the civil service long enough to know that they do not make that kind of change. Once they are used to the forestry department, they keep that department. I am sure that all the people who are in that department now have a vested interest in it and wish to keep it that way. I am sure that is the case with the fisheries department. Obviously, this decision has been made by somebody else, and I suggest that this somebody else is disregarding parliamentary procedure. Most of us, and you in particular, Mr. Chairman, will have to be concerned with whether or not there is any point in continuing our discussion on the reorganization bill if, in fact, the decision on it has already been made and is irreversible.

Mr. McCleave: I have not had a chance to check the blue book on spending, so I do not know whether the astronomic observatories have shifted their spending program from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to the National Research Council. Perhaps one of my colleagues might look up that point while I am talking. In the meantime, I wish to make a point that has not been made so far this afternoon but which I think none the less is a germane point, namely, that Your Honour has to decide what is in a name and for what it stands. I have a very simple proposition, that it