

sidered concurrently by the House at one stage or another.

In the same session, bills in relation to the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act, the Financial Administration Act and the Statute Law (Superannuation) Amendment Act, all with interdependent provisions, again were being considered concurrently by the House. In that regard, I suggest that reference be made to the Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Joint Committee on the Public Service of Canada in the 1966-67 session. In the 1968-69 session, reference might be made to amendments to the Financial Administration Act and an act respecting the organization of the government of Canada, both of which received royal assent on March 28, 1969.

I have spent some time on these examples because I was asked to do so by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and I know other hon. members share his interest.

It could have been suggested that the bill and the related estimate, which in fact form an integral part of the preliminary stage in the passage of a supply bill now before the House, were not considered by the same committee and that substantive provisions of one of them could be or could have been altered or amended so that one would not have been consonant or consistent with the other. That question, I suggest, is one that could and must be resolved at the committee of the whole or report stage on the second bill to reach either stage.

What would be the alternative? It would be, surely, to set aside consideration of this bill and take in all its stages the item in the supplementary estimates. This would not only involve the approval of the estimate as it now exists as item 5 at page viii of today's Routine Proceedings under "Notice of Motion Pursuant to Standing Order 58(4)(a)." This would also in effect mean the amendment of a statute of parliament through an item in the estimates. This procedure in the past has always been vigorously resisted by members of the House of Commons.

That is, in effect, what the Chair was trying to say on January 25, as reported at page 69 of *Votes and Proceedings*—and I gave earlier the reference to the page in *Hansard*—when I stated, in part, "that the authorizing bill must become law before the authorization of the relevant estimate by the Appropriation Act". May I draw attention to the use of the words "authorizing" and "authorization" as used in that citation which was taken from May's eighteenth edition at page 731.

Given the choice, I feel that members of the House would expect that the Chair would favour the method that members themselves have advocated consistently on past occasions. The Chair has always agreed with this position, and it is to be consistent with past rulings that I suggest that the procedure now before us is the desirable one. Accordingly, the third reading will proceed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander).

Unemployment Insurance Act

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity of leading off this debate. Incidentally, we are all very pleased to see that the minister is back in harness. I understand that he had been affected by the flu. I am sure I speak for all hon. members when I say that we are very pleased to have him back in our midst.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Alexander: Having said that, I want to know why the usual custom of the minister who is carrying the load is not being followed, that is, his making the necessary submissions in which he could perhaps discharge the heavy onus that is upon him as a result of requiring these changes.

I think it is quite irresponsible for the government to bring in this bill, have second reading, at which time the minister did speak, and take the bill to committee without making available the responsible minister. I do not blame him for that; we all understand that he was sick. The government brought in the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang). If the minister is not quite up to it at this time perhaps we should have the Minister of Justice here to again give us his wisdom which most of us in committee, except for those on the other side, did not accept.

Many questions were raised during the committee stage which have been left unanswered by the fast-footing of the Minister of Justice who was sincere in his fast-footedness. We expected the minister to look at the proceedings to find out the several questions that we asked. Perhaps he thinks they were not asked correctly. I am at a loss to understand why the minister is not putting forward the position of the government at this time. Be that as it may, I do not see anyone jumping up to accept my challenge. I assume he does not wish to speak. If the minister wished to speak, he would have put a little something on the record so that the nation would know he is back, healthy and prepared to support this bill. I will certainly defer to him for as long as he wants. I will sit down, Mr. Speaker. I hope that as a result of my charity the Speaker will not look upon me as having lost my place. If we cannot have it that way, the minister can speak later.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I should bring to the attention of the hon. member that following the rules and practices of this House, in moving third reading the minister is deemed to have spoken. That is the interpretation of the rule. As no one is entitled to speak in reply on third reading, the hon. member should complete his speech or give the floor to another hon. member.

• (2030)

Mr. Baldwin: We understood this. This is why my hon. friend suggested the House would give unanimous consent to the minister to answer the thousand-and-one questions which the people of Canada are waiting to hear answered. We are prepared to give unanimous consent to the minister to speak now and deal with this matter. I think he should.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. We all know the House is master of its own rules and that the minister may speak by unanimous consent. But the Chair could not