

Ways and Means

the Minister of Finance should make his budget presentation now with Your Honour in the chair.

Mr. Speaker: With the greatest deference to the hon. member, I do not know whether he is able to read the mind of the Minister of Finance at this time, but there is nothing which indicates to me, either by a direct statement from the Minister of Finance or otherwise that he or any other minister intends to make a budget presentation in the accepted sense of the term. That being the case, how can the Chair avoid the direction of the peremptory portion of standing order 58, the opening portion?

That is the difficulty the Chair faces at the moment. There is no latitude given to the Chair but for this one exception cited in the subsection, concerning which I have no knowledge, no indication, and certainly no statement from the Minister of Finance. Thus with all due respect to the hon. member I am in the same position, I submit, as he is. Until the Minister of Finance says he is going to make a budget presentation I have no alternative but to follow the rules and leave the chair, and that is what I propose to do.

Mr. Knowles: Would Your Honour permit me to draw your attention to what the leader of the house himself said on this matter, as reported on page 696 of *Hansard* for Thursday, October 18:

But if interim supply is concluded on Friday, we would then consider moving into ways and means on Monday and the Minister of Finance and other members of the house would deal with economic affairs.

Then the Minister of Finance would bring along the budget resolutions which are listed in *Votes and Proceedings* of September 27.

Then again on Friday morning, as reported on page 703 of *Hansard*, the leader of the house said:

The second suggestion I would make is that, again with the consent of the house, the Minister of Finance be permitted as much time as he requires for his statement and that whoever leads off for the official opposition also be granted as much time as is required to make a reply.

Earlier he had said:

Instead of speeches being related strictly to the budget resolution at the time, we suggest, and this would have to be done by consent of the house, that a general debate be permitted with the Minister of Finance leading off.

I submit we have been told we are going to have a general debate on financial and economic matters, and that it will lead into dealing with the budget resolutions which appeared in *Votes and Proceedings* at the beginning of the session, items which were mentioned in the speech from the throne and which were carried over from last April.

[Mr. Knowles.]

Then again, if Your Honour would look at *Hansard* for April 11, 1962, you will discover that the Prime Minister told the last session of parliament that under certain provisions we should be in a position to resume the budget debate. Last session the budget debate was not resumed after that indication had been given. As I see it, the leader of the house has told us that we are now to have a resumption of the budget debate, only he is saying that we should have it in committee of ways and means with the Speaker not in the chair.

I suggest that we are playing with words if we try to say that what the Minister of Finance is now about to give us is not a budget presentation. If it is not a budget presentation, then he is not being fair to the house; but I am satisfied he intends to make a full statement concerning the financial position of this country, leading into the budget resolutions. This is a budget presentation both within the clear meaning of words and within the terms of citation 58, subsection 1.

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): May I add a few words in support of what already has been said. Your Honour seemed to have some doubt because we were anticipating before the minister made his statement what kind of statement he might make. I submit with deference that there should be no doubt on this point in the light of the answers which have been given repeatedly by the leader of the house since Thursday of last week. The hon. gentleman referred to this question on Friday morning and again on Friday evening.

I ask Your Honour to consider not only what is being said by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre but also the answer which was given to me on October 19 last parts of which have already been read by the hon. member who preceded me. However this part was not and I quote from a statement made by the leader of the house:

This is a departure from the procedure in the past but it would open the way for a general discussion on economic matters in Canada. It would be in the committee stage where there is considerable freedom of debate and, with this opportunity being provided, we would hope that the house might see fit to deal rather promptly with interim supply today, which involves asking for a month's supply just to carry on the normal business of the government.

I do not think there was any doubt in the mind of the leader of the house at that time—certainly there was none in mine—that the nature of the statement or speech to be made by the Minister of Finance would involve economic and financial matters.

Before Your Honour leaves the chair I think the Minister of Finance should indicate to the house what kind of statement he intends