

doing it in the last-minute atmosphere of the supply bill itself. On the other hand, I am not attempting to enforce a rigid regime on the House. Certainly, if after trying this method of dealing with these items there are suggestions which might improve that procedure or, on the contrary, objections to it, I would be pleased to hear them.

For the moment, I am asking the co-operation of the House in advising me by two o'clock tomorrow which items might be under dispute so that I can announce them to the House at three o'clock. It seems to me that, in fairness, I ought to hear that argument on a supply day and therefore it ought to be done on Friday, which would be the second last day and the last day prior to the day when the supply bill will be introduced.

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make one comment with respect to this matter. As I understand the situation, there are grave doubts about dollar items in the estimates which have been placed there because the government has not followed, generally, the practice that Your Honour dealt with extensively the last time. There is a questionable practice on the part of the government. I am not arguing that it is a questionable practice, but it is questionable. The point is, it is not there because the opposition has engaged in questionable practices.

If we are going to have that kind of argument in the House, I would respectfully suggest it is inappropriate for Your Honour to use one of our allotted days for the purpose. We would be quite prepared to co-operate and argue the matter tomorrow, which would allow us to settle the matter well in advance and still leave the allotted day. There is some work involved in preparation for an allotted day, so we should not have an allotted day for discussion of the subject. I do not argue with your procedure, sir, but I am a little concerned—indeed, worried—that you should choose an allotted day to deal with a matter that involves questionable practices on the part of the government. We would be quite prepared to proceed tomorrow on the matter, which happens to be a full parliamentary day and not part of a day.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The difficulty about proceeding tomorrow is that no advance notice could be provided. Part of the regime which I am trying to set in motion is one which would give participants advance notice so that arguments could be prepared. One of the disadvantages we faced the last time was that some items were raised on the floor of the House and were not defended or disputed. I had no way of knowing if the minister had ever been advised that those items were going to be called into dispute. That is part of the procedure that should be clarified.

I hope the arguments will not be very lengthy and that no injustice will be done. Since the matter is related to the supply process, however, it seems appropriate that it be done on a supply day. That is why I am doing it now, instead of doing it on the final supply day which is when it would ordinarily take place. It seems to me that if I do not do anything about it, then it will use up part of the supply day, being the last supply day.

Instead of that, I am using up part of the second last supply day. After we have tried this, if there are representations further to that made by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton I shall certainly take them into account.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the procedure which you have proposed is quite acceptable to us. I would say, in respect of the view expressed by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton to the effect that the government is engaging in questionable practices, that in preparation of the supplementary estimates we have been very careful to examine the rulings made by the Chair. We have attempted to take these into account and adjust the supplementary estimates accordingly. To my knowledge, quite a number of items are brought forward by various departments as a matter of urgency which I refuse to have included in the supplementary estimates in order to conform as fully as possible with Your Honour's previous rulings. There may be a debate as to the implementation of those rulings, and if so we will attempt to defend what we believe is in conformity with them.

● (1512)

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, if it is of any aid in facilitating the proceedings of the House, I am prepared to indicate now that the two votes which give us some concern in terms of being proper are 31a, under Regional Economic Expansion dealing with the Cape Breton Development Corporation, and L56a of the Department of Transport dealing with the surface transportation program. These two, we feel, contradict the judgment made by the Speaker in March when commenting on using supplementary estimates to, in fact, amend legislation.

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[Translation]

FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

First report of Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry, in both official languages—Mr. Béchard.

(*Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.*)

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[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

REFERENCE OF VOTES TO COMMITTEE

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I would like, under Standing Order 59 and because of an inadvertent omission in the original reference of the supplementary estimates, to move that votes L36a and L37a relating to the Department of External Affairs for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1978, be referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence.