

Supply—Resources and Development

The Deputy Chairman: I did not cut him off.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): You lectured him. Let us put it that way. Your lecture was full of such words as "I allowed so and so." With the greatest respect, sir, you do not allow anything. We have certain privileges in discussing these items as a matter of right, and you may stop us only when we exceed those rights. I have great respect for you personally and for the position you occupy, but you are not allowing us to do anything. You can disallow but you do not allow us. The rules of the house do the allowing.

Mr. McIvor: Mr. Chairman—

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I quite appreciate the assistance which I receive from the hon. members. I want to assure them that I try at all times to give the greatest freedom of discussion.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): May I quickly agree with that, but do not use that word again. Do not say what you allow us to do.

The Deputy Chairman: Perhaps the expression does not suit my hon. friend but what I intended to convey was that the standing order which says that speeches in committee must be strictly relevant to the item must mean something. All hon. members will agree that we had a general discussion on the first item. When I began my explanations, the hon. member for York West had completely finished his remarks. I waited until the very end. What I want to get at now is that there are many other branches in this department. For example, the national museum will come later, and the next item is national parks.

I should like to ask for the opinion of experienced members. As they understand the rule that speeches in committee must be strictly relevant to the item, is it their view that when the first item of a branch comes before the committee a general discussion should be allowed, notwithstanding the fact that by practice a general discussion is allowed on the first item, departmental administration? I do not want to cut off anyone but here is the position in which I find myself. Some hon. members take the floor and others do not. When an hon. member takes the floor and starts to discuss something which he should have discussed on another item, it is quite understandable that other members feel that the chairman should intervene more than he does. That is the situation in which I find myself. I have to expedite the business of the house and at the same time permit free discussion. I am quite willing to do that. That is exactly

what is required by my position and it is what I am doing. I am asking now for the views of members of the house. Should another general discussion take place on the first item of each branch notwithstanding the fact that a general discussion was allowed on the first item concerning departmental administration, and notwithstanding the rule which says that speeches in committee must be strictly relevant to the item under consideration? If hon. members want to co-operate I am sure we can achieve the purpose for which the committee is set up, that is, to examine the estimates properly and at the same time expedite the business.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): On the same point of order, may I say that I am so happy to agree with the general remarks which you have made, sir, because I too read the rules many years ago. Nevertheless you have suggested that an hon. member is out of order when he refers to national parks in discussing wildlife. Wildlife is largely contained in our national parks, is one of the greatest tourist attractions and assets of our national parks, and predators in those parks are destroying the game animals which have a sanctuary there. When you tell the hon. member for York West that he is out of order because he mentions national parks, that is—forgive me—something beyond my very limited understanding.

The Deputy Chairman: The hon. member will understand that I do not want to delay the discussion any longer than is necessary. Wildlife comes under item 365 and national parks under item 366.

An hon. Member: Item 365 was passed.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): Oh, no, it was not.

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Chairman, you have suggested that we should not carry on a general discussion under these items. I had some remarks to make on an item we have not reached yet, and I refrained from making those remarks earlier because on one or two occasions the minister himself pointed out to hon. members that they should wait until the item is called and then have their discussion. I followed the minister's suggestion; I waited for my item to be called. Now you come along with a ruling under which we are going to be held strictly to the item before the committee and may not speak generally. You are putting us in this position, that when the administration item is called every hon. member is going to be forced to carry on his discussion at that time. I do not believe the minister wants that; I think he would rather wait until the item in