

*Ways and Means*

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Chairman, it is not my intention to comment on the point that has been raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, but I would like to say a word or two on another point. I have not checked the history of the last hundred years to be absolutely sure of this point, but I believe this will be the first time in which three different sets of estimates have come before one session of parliament.

That is what we have done in this 1966-67 session. We have passed the main estimates for 1965-66, although we did it at a time when most of the money had been spent. Then we dealt with the estimates for 1966-67, including all the supplementary estimates which we finished just half an hour ago. Now we are starting on the estimates for 1967-68. Without assessing any blame I suggest that this robs sessions themselves of their meaning and it also downgrades the question of dealing with estimates.

In the course of a year we are never sure whether we are dealing with money already spent, and therefore can do nothing about it, or whether we are voting money for the future and doing it on the basis of an advance, and therefore feel we must restrain ourselves from going into any discussion. I am not going to repeat what was said earlier about the recommendations which came from the public accounts committee and from the special committee on rules and procedure, but I hope all of us in this house, government and opposition, cabinet ministers and private members—and this calls for co-operation—will do our best to get the work of parliament on a more regular basis so that there will be meaning to our procedures with respect to the voting of money.

As I have said, in this session we are now attacking our third set of estimates, and in almost every case we have done this under some sort of special circumstances. It can hardly be said that we are ever dealing with the expenditure of money at the right time. I therefore hope the government will take seriously the suggestion of the committee on rules and procedure that we try to deal with the estimates during the first 90 sitting days of a session, so that we will be dealing with them before the money is spent, and dealing with them in a meaningful way.

I could berate the government for the mistakes it has made in the past. I could turn this into a lecture to the government, but at this point I merely suggest this is something

of concern to all of us and I hope we will soon get things on a more regular basis.

**Mr. Leboe:** I think it is essential, Mr. Chairman, that estimates are dealt with early in a session so that the government itself can get control of a situation. There is one factor in connection with the situation that has been outlined by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I have had the experience of fighting six elections in 12 years. In such a situation we naturally get behind with legislation and estimates. This is one of the reasons why I think it is time all of us took cognizance of the situation in Canada today, and forgot about elections for a little while in order to get along with the business of this house.

**Mr. Monteith:** Mr. Chairman, this resolution calls for an expenditure of \$583,621,688.91. So that there will be no misunderstanding and lest anyone think that this is the total amount of money which will be spent during the month of April, I wish to point out that there is probably an equal amount of money which is statutorily provided for, and which is not being voted at present. As a consequence, with the huge expenditure forecast for 1967-68 of approximately \$11.2 billion, the actual amount which is going to be spent in April is closer to \$1 billion than the amount specified in the resolution.

Resolution reported and concurred in.

● (10:40 p.m.)

**WAYS AND MEANS****INTERIM SUPPLY**

**Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Revenue and President of the Treasury Board)** moved that the house go into committee of ways and means.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Benson in the chair.

**Mr. Benson** moved:

Resolved, that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending the 31st March, 1968, the sum of \$583,621,688.93 be granted out of the consolidated revenue fund of Canada.

Motion agreed to.

Resolution reported and concurred in.

**Mr. Benson** thereupon moved for leave to introduce Bill No. C-283, for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service for the financial year ending the 31st March, 1968.