

provided for up to the end of May. This supply bill covers only April and May, and a new supply bill will have to be brought in early in June to cover that month or the next two months.

In no instance is the total amount of any item being released. I would like to advise honourable senators that the form of the bill is similar in most respects to that of appropriation bills passed in previous years. The provisions in new section 3 set out in definite terms for the first time the principles which have been accepted and acted upon down through the years.

Section 4 of the bill is required to ratify certain contracts that had to be entered into and actions that had to be taken by the Government before estimates could be tabled, in order to ensure that essential services and programs did not falter during the six weeks of the current fiscal year.

The passing of this bill will not prejudice or interfere in any respect with the rights and privileges of honourable members to criticize any item in the estimates when they come before us for consideration. In other words, the usual undertaking is hereby given that such rights and privileges will be respected and will not be curtailed or restricted in any manner whatsoever as a result of the passing of this measure.

Honourable senators, that is a brief explanation of the bill. I have in my hand here full details relating to schedules A, B, C, D and E, and if information is required as to any items therein I shall do my best to give it.

Hon. W. Ross Macdonald: Honourable senators, first of all I wish to compliment my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Aseltine) on his very clear explanation of this bill, the first he has presented to the house since assuming his important role as Leader of the Government in the Senate. I am sure we are all pleased with the manner in which he made this presentation, and we shall look forward to similar presentations in the years to come.

I do not propose to ask many questions, but there are some observations I should like to make. The leader referred to the fact that the bill includes an expenditure that has already been made during this fiscal year under the authority of warrants issued by the Governor General, in the amount of \$303,560,195. Well, that amount has been spent between April 1 and May 15, and there is very little we can do about it now—it is gone, and we have no say in it. That is not the only amount that has gone in that manner. Parliament was dissolved at the end of last January, and the estimates

for the fiscal year 1957-58 has not been approved by this house. It is true that we had passed, I believe, five interim supply bills, but on each occasion we reserved our right to criticize or ask for further information regarding the items included in the interim supply bill. By voting for those bills we did not approve of the expenditures; all we did was to put funds in the hands of the Government so that it could pay current bills. And so far as the bill now before us is concerned, we are not approving of the expenditures for which it provides, but we realize that the Government must make certain payments by the end of May and we are prepared to advance the necessary money to the Government. However, as I say, we certainly are not approving of these expenditures; we are just putting the Government in funds.

In going back to the fiscal year 1957-58, I find we passed five interim supply bills, which provided for funds to the extent of ten-twelfths of most of the items and eleven-twelfths of some. I merely point that out to impress upon honourable senators that money has been spent by the Government without the approval of Parliament. Again, before Parliament was convened and was not in session, another considerable sum of money—the amount that I mentioned, some \$303 million—was spent without the approval of Parliament. I suppose by passing the bill before us today we do approve that expenditure; but there is nothing we can do about it—it has gone.

Honourable senators, yesterday afternoon the Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Aseltine) tabled in the house the estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1959. We have just had a chance to glance at these estimates since they were tabled, and I am sure we were all astounded to learn the total amount the Government proposes to spend during the fiscal year upon which we have now entered. On page 3 of the estimates it will be observed that the total estimated expenditures for this year are \$5,179,343,555, and this amount does not include old age pension payments of \$555 million. When that figure is added to the estimates which have been tabled in this house, the total proposed expenditure is \$5,734,343,555. That is an increase of \$318 million over the total expenditures of last year. I said "total expenditures", but of course no honourable senator has sat in this house during any year when there has not been at least one supplementary estimate presented. I believe that last year there were at least three supplementary estimates, and probably there will be three this year.