

Supplementary Estimates

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The applause I am receiving indicates I had better cut this short. I am pleased to do so. I reserve my right to continue the fight against dollar items during the months and years ahead. But if the government has decided on this piece of legislation, which involves both terms and conditions on the one hand and money on the other, it is pretty hard to say it is out of order to bring it in through the medium of his bill.

It seems that the interesting amendment of my hon. friend for Peace River is more a point of order than an amendment. I think Your Honour will probably have to rule that the bill is in order, now that item 17b is being left as it was originally. If Your Honour does so rule and we get into Committee of the Whole on the bill and get to the schedule, then my friends around me will say what they think about the Lift program.

Mr. Speaker: I thank hon. members for their advice on the very interesting amendment proposed by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). My original reaction of course was that there was something that did not appear to be right. Perhaps even the comments made very generously by the hon. member for Peace River indicate that this is a novel attempt to get at a motion of this kind.

I believe even if we are operating under new rules, the principles which must guide the Chair in connection with reasoned amendments are the same. The reasoned amendment must oppose the principle of the bill. I refer hon. members to May's 17th edition, page 527, paragraph (2) and page 528, paragraph (3):

An amendment, which amounts to no more than a direct negation of the principle of the bill, is open to objection.

It seems that the amendment which the hon. member has proposed to the House at the present time declares itself in principle, but is not opposing the motion which is before the House in the sense it would be opposing the principle of that motion. I have very serious reservations. It seems we would be opening the door rather wide if this kind of amendment to this motion were accepted at the present time. I can assure the hon. member that I will give the matter further thought. I would be prepared on some other occasion to give further consideration to an amendment such as this; I would be in a better position to accept it or refuse it having given the matter additional study. On the basis of the limited thinking I have been able

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to do, and on the strength of the views expressed both by the hon. member for Peace River and by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, I would think that the amendment should not be put to the House.

• (4:00 p.m.)

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister without Portfolio): I think it would be appropriate for me to say a few things in response to the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) concerning the item to which he has referred in seeking to move his amendment.

I believe the House appreciates that it is not by any means a minor item but that it represents in fact, a significant expenditure proposed on behalf of the people of Canada in the interest of the agricultural community of the west. The hon. member for Peace River chose to look to the form of the proposal and said it was iniquitous for us to use this form to pay to the farmers of the prairies the proposed \$100 million in connection with the LIFT program. The hon. member has apparently missed the point. The totality of the LIFT program is by no means comprised in this item. The item contains the payments to farmers which it is proposed to make in connection with an acreage adjustment plan. It was apparent to us that this represented an extremely important matter for the prairie region.

Mr. Baldwin: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would be delighted if the minister had been allowed to speak on my amendment, had it been put, but it seems to me he is speaking on an amendment which Your Honour ruled could not be put. There is some question, therefore, as to whether the minister can proceed.

Mr. Speaker: I must say I have serious reservations about the procedure we are now following. I thought the minister's comments perhaps were of an introductory nature and that he would return to the consideration of the motion which is before us at the present time. I have to remind the minister that the proposed amendment was ruled out of order and that what we have before us now is a motion for second reading. I wonder whether it would not be better procedure, if the House agrees, for this debate on the item in question to take place in the committee of the whole once there has been agreement to accept the motion and the matter has been referred to the committee.