

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 22, 1990

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

#### MAIN ESTIMATES, 1990-91

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting Estimates for the financial year ending March 31, 1991, was presented by the Hon. Robert de Cotret and read by Mr. Speaker to the House.

**Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to table in support of the Estimates, Part I, the Government Expenditure Plan.

I will table with the Clerk of the House on behalf of my colleagues Part III of the Estimates consisting of 73 departmental expenditure plans, with the remaining 14 to be tabled on or before March 12.

These documents will be distributed to members of the standing committees to assist in their consideration of the spending authority sought in Part II of the Estimates.

• (1110)

**Mr. Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you have just heard what we have all heard, that in fact the minister today is tabling the estimates in Part III of 73 out of the 87 respective divisions of the Estimates.

In 1983 the Standing Committee of Public Accounts of this House published a report which was concurred in by this House to the effect that Part IIIs were going to be produced for all relevant departments.

Today we are told by the minister that the rules we have established by this House for the tabling of the

Estimates have not been followed. He is informing us that 14 of those departments will not have Part IIIs tabled today.

We have just ended a briefing session this morning in a lock-up type format. Until such time as the Estimates were tabled, I was not free to rise on this point of order and to inform the Chair of this shortcoming and this failure on the part of the government to live within the rules.

This morning in this lock-up we asked why the rules of the House have not been followed. The explanation given to hon. members who participated in the lock-up was that the government was aware it intended to make what it considered to be important changes in the area of the Estimates for those 14 departments and it took a conscious decision not to print the Part IIIs.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that the rules of this House, which we have made for ourselves and for the government to follow, are not suggestions. We do not decide that the government is going to follow the rules if it is convenient for the government. The rules are that the Estimates are tabled, Part I, Part II the expenditure plan, and Part III which are the detailed expenditures of each respective department. Those rules are to be observed by the government.

This is not a mere decision that was made by someone at some point in time. This was a decision of the House. It was a report of the standing committee adopted by the House, and since then the Estimates have been printed that way.

Furthermore, the report in question made to this House by the committee of public accounts was made pursuant to a recommendation of the Auditor General who is responsible to you, Sir, as the custodian of our rights in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that the government has failed to live within the rules. Of course we cannot prevent the government from tabling the documents in question for the mere fact that I could not rise in this House and state that the documents were incomplete. I