

Supply

sit beyond ten o'clock, and this was rejected by the NDP. We also offered to pass certain items, and this too was rejected.

I now make the suggestion to the committee, in order to speed up the business of supply and get this bill through this afternoon by, as I and we in this party hope, three o'clock, that by unanimous consent we agree to pass items 5a under External Affairs without debate, 1a under Finance without debate, 1a under Justice without debate, items 10a and 15a under Public Works without debate, the item in connection with parliament without debate, items 31a and 32a under Regional Economic Expansion without debate, items 15a, 35a and 90a under Secretary of State without debate, items 65a, 85a, 90a, L110a, 115a under Department of Transport without debate, the Treasury Board item 5a without debate, Urban Affairs item 10a without debate, and item 10a under Veterans Affairs without debate. We on this side are prepared to pass all of those items now without debate.

Mr. Peters: On the same point of order, Mr. Chairman, I am quite happy to see that the Official Opposition wishes to go home, and I am quite prepared to let its members do so. However, we are prepared to discuss, within a reasonable length of time, some of the estimates remaining before us. We are well aware of the fact that most of the discussion that has taken place has come from the hon. member's own party. I am surprised that he has now become the leader of that party, and asks that his suggestions be taken into consideration. I reject his suggestion, and certainly do not give unanimous consent.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Chairman, I would urge the hon. member and his party to reconsider. With respect to the number of speakers who have participated, the combined NDP and Social Credit in the House have 46 members and they fielded 22 in the debate while in committee of the whole. We in this party have 107 members, and we fielded 25 speakers. I think those facts should be on the record, and I urge my hon. friends to the left to agree to pass these items by consent.

I understand that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has specified three departments on which his members wish to speak. We have left those deliberately out of our suggested items to be passed by unanimous consent. If we do this, we could be through by three o'clock this afternoon. I appeal to them to be reasonable, and to complete and pass these items by unanimous consent.

Mr. Lang: On the question of order, Mr. Chairman, I am certainly delighted that at least hon. members opposite are arguing about who is now going to be the most co-operative, in trying to make sure that we get through these estimates with some expedition. It seems to me that in view of this discussion we may be able to reach agreement about not debating certain items when they are called, particularly where there is some general agreement about not speaking on them. But given that, and in view of the exchange, I think we should simply call the items in sequence, and hope we have a real spirit of co-operation in fact from all sections of the House and not just from the spokesman for a party.

[Mr. Nielsen.]

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, there is just one point that should be made clear. As I understand it, what we are now discussing is the schedule to the bill in its entirety, and by the rules we are not permitted to vote on or pass individual items. When the hon. member for Yukon gets up and says, "Let us now pass items so-and-so and so-and-so," he should be advised that this cannot happen. If that were possible, if it were possible to have votes on some of these items then we could have the votes and get them over with, but all that needs to happen to expedite the conclusion of the consideration of the schedule is just for us to get along.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Our party has always agreed to co-operate in speeding up the business of this House and I do not like the rather unflattering remarks made by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). I should like him to know that we think—and I agree with what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) said—that what he suggests is counter to the practices of this House. As far as we are concerned, we would be ready to have the Chair call the votes one after the other as they are before us, and we will do as we have done since the beginning, that is to say we will express our opinion on those votes if we think it is necessary. We are prepared to co-operate.

However, one thing is sure, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for Yukon had agreed to talk it over with parliamentary leaders of all parties before making his little stage act he probably would have received better co-operation from his colleagues.

[English]

The Chairman: We will continue to discuss vote 20a in the schedule, relating to environment. The hon. member for Timiskaming.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, as I was indicating last night much of the discussion that has taken place, particularly with respect to the James Bay situation, has been about the effect on people of the environmental changes resulting from the development. But there is also the major question of what the environmental experts themselves have to say on this matter. I was urging the minister to give some consideration to this question and to consult other departments that may be involved with the subject.

As the minister is well aware, a great deal of hydroelectric development has taken place in the province of Ontario. In that province most of the rivers in the James Bay watershed have already been harnessed. Probably the largest of the early developments that took place in Canada was that at Fraserdale in the Abitibi canyon. Since then there have been many projects, the last one the Cannal project in the James Bay watershed. I am sure the information is available to the minister on the effects that have taken place. Many of us are interested in knowing whether, as a nation, we should be pursuing a project as large as the James Bay project.