

under the rules, be brought before committee of the whole. Any item may be formally opposed and voted on separately from others. Nevertheless, the business of supply differs from other business in that supply bills are rarely debated and, even on those occasions when they are, under the rules they must be disposed of at a specified time. Therefore, a great deal of forbearance is required with regard to the wording of estimates or the use of \$1 items.

This is not to say, however, that the use of \$1 items in any way diminishes the control of the House over expenditure or deprives the House of its opportunity to debate the creation of new programs or agencies. One dollar items, like any other items, may be considered in standing committee or in committee of the whole. When standing committees report them, the reported items may be considered by the House. Motions by the opposition may be framed in such a manner as to deal with the subject matter of any item and, ultimately, any item may be voted on separately. The opposition has not taken advantage of any of these devices. They cannot complain of lost opportunities when they do not take the opportunities available to them already. If they want to deal with substance, they can. Indeed, it would not be unfair to suggest that they would serve this country better if they would deal with matters of substance rather than attempt to cloak their absence of ideas and unwillingness to work in righteous indignation about matters of form.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, I could quite understand the opposition raising a point of order with respect to \$1 items. I can understand them pressing their point very hard. That is what they should have done. But to spend a day like today, when they could have raised other issues, having already raised that particular one in an appropriate manner, amounts to no more than wasting the time of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1550)

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I go along with the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Sharp) in one respect, but in one respect only. Like him, I was a bit surprised when my hon. friends of the Official Opposition, after raising the point of order about \$1 items yesterday, put down the same subject in a motion for debate and vote today. But at that point my going along with the hon. member for Eglinton ends.

I do not agree that this is an unimportant issue, that it is a waste of parliamentary time. Nor do I agree that it puts the Speaker in any kind of awkward position, whether he thinks so

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or not. In my view, the issue involved in this motion is an issue of decades, perhaps of centuries, namely, the whole question of the relationship between parliament and the executive. Even if some day we get this issue solved and put on a proper basis, I hope we will not forget to talk about it, because it is very important to the functioning of parliament that that relationship be on a proper basis. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, when the vote is called at 9.45 tonight we shall be voting for the motion.

I suppose that what I want to say now will lead to the charge that I am dealing in trivialities; but as one who is concerned about the fine points of parliamentary procedure and also about the fine points of the English language, I wish those in the Conservative party who draft these motions would not forever split their infinitives. But they have done it again today when they use the words "to fully discuss". Surely they could say "to discuss fully". This gives me the opportunity to say that I am delighted that my French speaking friends in the House do not split their infinitives, even if I have to say that it is because they cannot do so. That is why we have it in French in an unsplit infinitive, "discuter à fond". Despite this what some may regard as a triviality, but which I nevertheless think is important, my colleagues and I are going to support this motion.

The hon. member for Eglinton suggested that the Speaker is put in a difficult position of some kind. I deny that completely. What was raised yesterday was a specific point of order which was narrowed down precisely to eight or ten \$1 items in the estimates. What the Speaker has to rule on today is whether any of those items are out of order and should not be allowed as items in the supplementary estimates to be voted on tonight. Whatever ruling he makes, there will still be \$1 items which may not be illegal or improper but the use of which is an abuse of the relationship between parliament and the executive, and that is what we are talking about today.

I think we have both the right and the duty to keep this issue alive. What we are seeking to do is to maintain the control of parliament over the executive. I say to my hon. friend that even if his constituents in Eglinton and my constituents in Winnipeg North Centre are not waiting for news of this esoteric debate, it is important to them that this parliament be a place where the executive is responsible to parliament. When an executive can short-circuit and short-cut the parliamentary process by the use of \$1 items, it is, in effect, downgrading parliament.

This is particularly true, and has been even more serious, since 1968 than prior thereto. I pick that date because it is the date when we made the rule changes which included the process we now follow in the passing of estimates. Prior to that date, a \$1 item could be discussed in full on the floor of the House. Now, estimates are shipped off to standing committees