

the plain and lucid statement which it contains, declares that the Speaker did resume the Chair, but does not indicate in any way that the Committee had risen for the purpose of reporting progress, or for any other purpose. Hon. gentlemen opposite take very strong ground in that regard, and my right hon. friend, as I understood him, said that it is absolutely impossible for the Speaker to resume the Chair, under any circumstances whatever, after the House has been resolved into Committee of the Whole, unless that committee carries a motion to report progress, or that the Chairman should leave the Chair, or for the purpose of reporting the conduct of any hon. member to the Speaker. We could give many illustrations which would indicate that that is not the case. For example, within the last week or two a message came to this House from the Senate. The House was in Committee of the Whole at the time; I consulted the officers of the House as to whether or not progress should be reported on that occasion, and I was assured by them that it was not necessary, and the Speaker therefore resumed the Chair. My right hon. friend would encounter another difficulty. Suppose some sudden illness prevented the Chairman of the Committee from taking any action at all? Something would have to be done in such a case, and it would seem to be proper that the Speaker should be ready to see that the proceedings of the House do not become absolutely futile, and that he should take such measures as would be necessary for putting the business of the House in order again. It seems also, following these two precedents, as well as following the dictates of common sense, that when disorder takes place in the Committee to such an extent that the Speaker observes that the House and the Committee are getting absolutely out of hand, the Speaker should take exactly the course which Your Honour did take on the occasion to which reference has been made. That is the way in which the matter impresses me, after having paid careful attention to all that has been said by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House.

After all, what is the evil that is to result from a course of that kind? It is perfectly well known by every member of this House that the Speaker, from his position in the House and the character of the duties with which he is invested, commands the respect and the obedience of the House to a greater extent than any chairman of a committee, whether regular or temporary. When you have a condition arising, therefore, in respect of which the hon. gentleman who is in the Chair, whether he be the regular or a temporary chairman, is unable to control the committee, it seems to me to be a very strict and a very dangerous principle

to adopt, that the Speaker could not, under such conditions, come to the rescue of the House and restore the order which for the time being has been lost. It would appear that, so far as danger to the credit, the reputation and the authority of the House is concerned, that danger is to be found not in the rule which we have been advocating on this side of the House, and which Mr. Speaker followed, but in the rule advocated by hon. gentlemen opposite. I submit, therefore, while it may have been proper and even desirable that the hon. member for Westmorland should bring this matter to the attention of the House, especially in view of the fact that hon. gentlemen opposite have felt themselves aggrieved by what has taken place, that, after the very full and reasonable discussion which has ensued has had its full effect, we will come to the reasonable conclusion that the course which His Honour the Speaker did take on the occasion in question was not only in the interests of this Parliament, was not only in the interests of the credit of this House, was not only dictated by common sense, but is also supported by precedents which enable it to be regarded as a proper course, even from strictly technical and constitutional standpoints.

SUPPLY.

House in Committee of Supply (Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair).

Royal Northwest Mounted Police, \$19,300.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Before the committee enters in consideration of this item, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he can give me the information which he said he would obtain? My information is that there is a very considerable sum of money due the creditors of the Government for work done during the current fiscal year. My hon. friend said he would make enquiry about it. If possible, I think we should first make provision for closing up the accounts of the current fiscal year before we enter upon the estimates for the next year. I am told that it would amount to several hundreds of thousands of dollars. My hon. friend said he was going to find out.

Mr. WHITE (Minister of Finance): I inquired about it the next morning, because it appeared to me that my hon. friend was deeply interested. I confess I cannot understand why he was so deeply interested as he appeared to be. However, I made inquiries at the Department of Public Works, and was informed that work has been done in connection with these dredging contracts for which there is no appropriation in the supplementary estimates that were under consideration on the