

*Anti-Inflation Act*

the hon. member is moving—relating to the application of the bill? Again, it would seem that there is difficulty here.

Contrast that motion with motion No. 2, which directs the board in a particular or specific way to direct its attention toward government spending and to make public its findings in respect of the tabling of estimates. What, in fact, is being suggested in that amendment is not that the board take on the obligation of controlling government spending, but simply that in the powers already given it—which are to make public, or make information known about government spending or policies open to government, among other things, and their effect on inflation, or failure of the government to take advantage of those policies and their effect on inflation—the hon. member proposes to add a specific responsibility, within a certain period of time after the tabling of estimates, the board must make a public declaration in respect of those estimates and the failure or the success of the government in taking advantage of whatever policies were open to it in respect of those estimates.

That directs the board's attention to making public information about government spending and therefore I would submit it is an amendment which the House must consider. Whether it favours it or not is the question the House will decide, but at least it flows from the powers and duties which are placed in the clause which is sought to be amended and does not introduce a new concept. However, simply a statement or a publication about government spending is an extension of the board's powers. Extending it to the point in motion No. 1 where the board would be obligated in fact to control government spending seems to me to be an introduction of a new concept into the bill, and in any case ought not to be introduced under this particular clause. The hon. member for York-Simcoe may want to argue the point.

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear your reasoning with respect to motion No. 1 and in due course I should like to reply. I was wondering whether the ruling on motion No. 1 could be deferred until later in the debate.

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not think there is any objection to having a deferral. The problem is that if Your Honour decides that perhaps there ought to be argument presented at a subsequent time, I direct the attention of the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) to the matter of motion No. 2. I argue that that motion is out of order as well and ought not to be dealt with.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The intention of the Chair at the present time certainly would be to accommodate hon. members by deferring argument on motion No. 1. However, because of the remarks I have made, I would prefer to hear argument now on motion No. 2. If I cannot be persuaded otherwise, I think the question of motion No. 2 ought to be discussed.

**Mr. J.-J. Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** My argument with reference to motion No. 2 could apply as well to motion No. 1. It is that the hon. member for York-Simcoe, in his motion, seeks, in effect, to delegate powers to the board which presently rest with the House. It is not only a question of a new concept

[Mr. Speaker.]

in this bill but it is a whole new concept in our constitutional process.

With regard to motion No. 2, the hon. member wishes to have estimates, when they are tabled in this House, reviewed by the Anti-Inflation Board. There is no greater power or jurisdiction which is protected by this House than that of granting supply, and if we read Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice at page 676, he deals quite extensively with the question of financial procedure. He sets out that the House has an obligation, and indeed a right, to review supply if it is being submitted to it by the Crown. In effect, what the hon. member for York-Simcoe wishes to do by his amendment is to have that particular responsibility removed from the House of Commons and placed with the Anti-Inflation Board.

● (1520)

I can understand that the hon. member for York-Simcoe is rather busy and perhaps would like to see that particular power delegated, but unfortunately there are other members of the House who do not feel that it is one of the prerogatives we should remove from ourselves. When we look at the motion, it is quite clear what it sets out. It says that the Anti-Inflation Board, on top of the other powers it might have, shall—

—make explicit such implications of the failure of the federal government to co-operate in combating inflation by monitoring the respective main and supplementary estimates of expenditures for each fiscal year of such government and publicly commenting, within 21 days after any such estimates are made public, upon any failure, disclose in such estimates, by such government to combat inflation.

Evidently the hon. member for York-Simcoe does not understand the purpose of estimates. Estimates are submitted to this House in order to secure, by the approval of the House, supply for the government. It is the responsibility of this House to review those estimates and dispose of them by approving or withholding supply to the government. By delegating that particular responsibility to the Anti-Inflation Board which is responsible indirectly to this House, the House would be delegating its responsibility to that board. That would not only introduce a new concept on this bill but would seek to amend our constitution by that fact. I would suggest that this particular argument could apply as well to motion No. 1.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I do not object to your decision to defer debate with regard to the procedural acceptability of motion No. 1, but in case it is deferred until a time later this day when I might be in committee, I would say briefly that although I do not agree with the substance of motion No. 1, it seems to me there is a good case for its procedural acceptability. What the hon. member is trying to amend is a clause which provides:

This act is binding on Her Majesty in right of Canada—

It seems to me that all he is trying to do in motion No. 1 is to spell out the way in which the act is binding on Her Majesty in right of Canada. I will say no more on that point, however. I have put in my nickel's worth in case I