

Business of Supply

house and parliament, and I also place a measure of blame upon the public media which see this happening but all too often are inclined to deal with matters which, politically speaking, have more sex appeal. In addition I blame the public for accepting this situation.

I think that an opposition party is not worthy to represent the people of this country unless it takes every opportunity, as we have in the past and as I am sure we intend to in the future, to call to the attention of the government, the house, parliament, the press and the public the dangerous situation that has now been brought about. All too often we are falling into the belief, one that has been sedulously encouraged and nourished by the government and its apologists, that all that our democratic process should now consist of is to elect a dictator every four years, hopefully a benevolent dictator but nevertheless a dictator, who will in fact have complete control, through the use of devices such as this, over the operations and fiscal policy of the government.

This would be bad enough if it worked, but it has not worked. It has not worked with this government. Our constitutional difficulties, the problem of poverty—the gap between the people in the lower income brackets and the rest of society is growing wider—our housing and our agricultural problems are still with us. For this reason it is becoming increasingly evident that governments alone, whether they are headed by a benevolent dictator or not, are unable to deal and incapable of dealing with these problems.

This is why I have taken it upon myself, with the support of our party and I believe of other hon. members on this side of the house, to move the motion I have. I am using it as a caveat to warn the house, parliament and the public of what is happening here. It simply is not good enough that this state of affairs be allowed to continue. This is part of the iceberg that is showing. I direct my words particularly to hon. members opposite when I urge them to join with us in this party and express their concern, their dislike of and apprehension of the kind of policy I have objected to and which forms the subject of the motion I have moved in this house.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, this is the first occasion since we revised our rules in December on which we have had a debate of this kind, namely, a consideration of final supplementary estimates in the house with Your Honour

[Mr. Baldwin.]

in the chair. The subject that we are discussing is, in my view, a terribly important one. I realize the house is not full and that every member is not sitting on the edge of his chair waiting to hear what is said. However, I submit that the issue is serious almost to the point of being grave.

Initially Your Honour made reference to the fact that there were two opposition motions on the order paper. I concurred in your selecting for debate the first one, namely, that moved by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). Perhaps I might be permitted to include in my remarks the wording of the motion that was filed in my name just so that it will be seen that the opposition parties are thinking alike on this issue. This is the motion of which I gave notice on Friday:

That this house concurs in the two recommendations in the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, presented to the house on February 28, 1969, and in the concern expressed therein over the extensive use of \$1 items in Supplementary Estimates (B) for the purpose of making statutory amendments and also for the purpose of transferring moneys from one account to another.

That wording simply makes it clear that what we want to endorse is the two paragraphs of the report of the miscellaneous estimates committee containing these two recommendations, which are to be found at page 756 of *Votes and Proceedings* for Friday, February 28:

Your committee expresses its concern at the extensive use of \$1 items for the purpose of statutory amendments particularly in final supplementary estimates which are under time limit as to examination in the standing committee and for debate in the house. Appropriate legislative amendments should be made in all but the most exceptional and urgent cases.

Your committee also noted with concern an ever greater use of \$1 items for the transfer of moneys from one account to another. In a number of cases an under-expended item served as a prolific source of funds for unrelated purposes in the same ministry.

I recognize that we are dealing here with matters that are somewhat technical and that it will be very easy for us in the course of this debate to get bogged down in detail. However, perhaps I can express my view of the situation in these words. People sometimes say that some day the computer is going to take over. I submit that as far as finances in government affairs are concerned, it already has. Parliament no longer has control of expenditures. We have the opportunity to engage in a debate like this, we have the opportunity to vote on package motions that