

*Dollar Items*

under Industry, Trade and Commerce. Paragraph (a) of vote 1d proposes to amend section 5 of the National Design Council Act by providing for the payment of remuneration to the members of the council. Vote 77d is equally unequivocal, in my opinion. It proposes to amend sections 26 and 28 of the Export Development Act by increasing the amounts permitted under those sections.

I confess that there are at least four other items which raise grave doubts in my mind. Those are Post Office vote 1d, Supply and Services vote 27d, Veterans Affairs vote 45d, and Public Works vote 10d. Those four raise grave doubts in my mind, and if the procedures I have suggested were in place at this time I certainly would look forward with some interest to the arguments that no new legislative authority was being sought by the presentation of those items.

The remaining items are less clear, but in any case, in the absence of a procedure which allows adequate confrontation and which would allow at least the hope for the making of an intelligent decision by the Chair, I caution hon. members not to take any of these decisions as a precedent, because I lean heavily on the absence of adequate procedures which can lead to a decision by the Chair which ought not in any way to be taken as a precedent binding in future situations.

I simply hope that by endeavouring to set out a procedure which would put us in the position of being able to listen to arguments directed against and in favour of specific items in estimates in the future, I have set before the House improved procedures for dealing with those arguments and also, at the same time, set before the House a basic principle which I will endeavour to apply in resolving these arguments when they occur.

**Mr. John M. Reid (Kenora-Rainy River):** Mr. Speaker, I think the decision you have handed down will help hon. members greatly in attempting to determine what is a \$1 item and how this dilemma can be resolved. I recall reading the decisions of Mr. Speaker Lamoureux of 1971, reading them again and not being able to find sufficient precision to be able to resolve our difficulties in trying to cope with the form of the estimates. We were concerned about what could be and what could not be included in the estimates. Your Honour's decision will be most helpful. I think the procedure you have outlined will also be helpful. I know that hon. members, myself included, will be happy to provide Your Honour with ideas as to how appropriate confrontation tactics can be evolved and how these questions can be properly decided.

The House now finds itself in a remarkably absurd position. A decision has now been handed down by Your Honour on the question which was raised yesterday, and this really ought to dispose of the matter. Yet at the same time Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition has chosen to take this opportunity to hold a vote on the question of \$1 items. I am not going to read the motion, but it does put the House in a rather odd situation of voting for the motion, perhaps voting against Your Honour's decision or voting against the motion and, again, voting against your decision. I think hon. members recognize that in terms of parliamentary procedure this is an important item.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Surely, every members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition understood yesterday that Your Honour would be bringing down a decision today, and why they wanted to frame a motion in such a way as to put the House in possibility of being against any decision brought down is totally beyond my capacity to understand.

● (1650)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Reid:** I want to make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that I take no objection to the right of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to bring forward the motion, but I do question their intelligence in bringing it forth at this particular time. The opposition parties get two voting days in a term, and it seems absurd to me, when we listen to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), complaining that we are not debating the issues facing the country today, that the opposition should come up with such as absurd proposition.

Members opposite cannot have it both ways. We understand the concern they feel about the rules, because we share it on this side. We are extraordinarily frustrated. Take a look at what this House of Commons has done since it reassembled. We have passed the grand number of seven pieces of legislation since we came back here in the fall. Look at the progress which has been made with other legislation: we have got hardly any legislation into committee. If one really wants to know what the House of Commons has been doing, all one has to do is examine those motions we have passed under Standing Order 43 in which we have congratulated the winners of the Stanley Cup, congratulated the winners of the skating championships and congratulated Her Majesty on the twenty-fifth anniversary of her reign. But we have not been dealing with the problems which face Canada. It is absurdities like the motion before us now, after a day on which we have taken part in a procedural debate on \$1 items, which bring the House of Commons and parliament in general into the rather low repute in which it is now held by the public at large.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre says he disagrees with the priorities set by the government in its program. That is his right. That is why he is on the other side. No government program will ever satisfy members on the other side of the House. Indeed, there is never going to be a government program which will satisfy all the members on this side of the House, either, no matter who forms the government. The fact is that we have limited resources. The fact is that the government must make decisions. The fact is that the government must bring down the program to present to parliament for action. But this parliament is unable to act.

I do not presume to know the reason for this. At one time I could say it was because the Conservatives were riding high in the Gallup poll and it was to their benefit to ensure that no decisions were taken in parliament. And one can argue, looking at what actually happened when the Conservatives were riding high in the poll, that very little did happen in the House of Commons. Now that they are not riding so high one might expect they would improve their performance to show that