

that this is a contemptuous act on the part of the government. It shows contempt for this House and for this committee. This fact has circumscribed and, indeed, prevented members of the government party from making any useful contribution to the debate. Their hands have been tied by the government they support. The publication of these estimates explains why we have not had any participation by members on the government side of the House, particularly those representing fishing constituencies.

This matter was put to His Honour, Mr. Speaker, before the House went into the committee of the whole in the form of a point of order. It was arranged at that time that should the committee of the whole House see fit to accept my amendment, the government would have to amend the estimates. My point of order is based on that ruling by His Honour, and I want this ruling reiterated by you as the Chairman of this committee. The committee should in no way be circumscribed or circumvented by the government anticipating that members will give approval to this particular part of the bill setting up the department of the environment. In so doing, the government makes this committee a bit of a farce, to put it mildly. This action makes this committee merely a rubber stamp.

Before I pursue my remarks at this stage of the proceedings I should like you, Mr. Chairman, to make a ruling on the effect this act by the government will have on the deliberations of this committee. This committee is charged with the responsibility of studying this bill clause by clause, amending it where amendments are necessary. I should like a clear ruling from you, as the Chairman of the committee, as to the effect this will have. How will it affect our deliberations in light of the amendment now before the committee?

**The Chairman:** Order, please. The hon. member for St. John's East has placed a point of order before the committee. I will make a ruling or comment on his point now, unless other hon. members would like to deal with the matter.

**Mr. Jerome:** Mr. Chairman, if I may very briefly, I should like to say that when one is considering what actions make a farce of this committee's proceedings, one should remember that it is the hon. member who just spoke who should be doing some soul searching rather than making accusations.

**An hon. Member:** That's a good way to start.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Muir:** Why don't you try some fiddle-faddle, too.

**Mr. Jerome:** Hon. members should understand that if estimates are tabled when legislation is before the House proposing a change in the name of a department then, at one time or another, an amendment to the substantive legislation or to the estimates will be necessary. If, as the hon. member has proposed, we should take account of the situation at this stage, then the estimates would be tabled in the name of the present department and when

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the legislation is passed an amendment would have to be made to the estimates.

There is absolutely no difficulty involved in making a change to the legislation or a change in the estimates tabled by the government. The hon. member knows that in either case an amendment will have to be made. If the present amendment carries, then we must anticipate that no amendment will be made to the estimates. If the estimates were tabled under the present name of the department, then obviously we must anticipate some kind of an amendment to the estimates. When the legislation is passed, one way or another, there is a very great possibility a change in the form of the estimates will have to be made. This is simply a matter of attempting to accommodate both pieces of legislation before the House at the same time. There is nothing anticipatory or malicious about it.

• (3:40 p.m.)

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Chairman, would the hon. member permit a question? Would he point out for the enlightenment of the committee where in this book we may find the estimates for the Department of Fisheries and Forestry?

**An hon. Member:** Come on; get up.

**The Chairman:** Order. Is the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate rising on a point of order?

**Mr. Lundrigan:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. Until two o'clock today the amendment moved by the hon. member for St. John's East was simple and clearcut. There was no complication to it whatsoever. As a matter of fact, we had been anticipating a favourable response from the government benches which would indicate that there would be a department of fisheries and the environment. Today, by the omission of the Department of Fisheries and Forestry from the estimates, to all intents and purposes this department has been eliminated. Therefore, a complication is introduced. If the amendment were approved by the Parliament of Canada today, other strings would have to be pulled and other amendments made to existing publications and documents. Perhaps, therefore, the government will not be as eager to accept a most legitimate amendment. So, I cannot accept the position of the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council. I cannot accept the argument that we are not being jeopardized in this House of Commons by the introduction of these estimates.

The fact is there is a new complication. I submit this will make it much more difficult for the House to accept the amendment which, until now, was clearcut. I think the rights of members have been jeopardized and I think the position taken by the parliamentary secretary is a little on the arrogant side. Perhaps the House of Commons will not accept the bill. Members might decide to throw it in the wastepaper basket. I have looked over these estimates and I cannot isolate fisheries from the environment. I do not know now what are the estimates of the department of fisheries. We are fighting for a livelihood in five provinces which depend almost exclu-