

committees to do the consideration of the estimates and we provided that a report back from a committee to the House is not debatable. We also provided that a bill based on estimates can be put through all stages in one day regardless of Standing Order 72, thus cutting out any chance for a debate at report stage, committee of the whole or any other opportunity. In other words, we completely removed from debate on the floor of the House the consideration of estimates.

At this moment I am not saying whether we did the right thing; I am simply stating a fact. I am saying we did it knowing very well what we were doing. In case anyone wants to say that on allotted days we can discuss estimates if we so provide, I am prepared to admit that such is the case. However, it depends on what opposition members put down whether or not that happens. But if an opposition member should put down as an opposition motion a discussion of the activities of a particular department, even at that point we do not have the estimates in front of us. In other words, we do not have the actual government proposal. At the risk of repetition, Sir, I therefore make the point that the change we made when we overhauled the rules a couple of years ago took estimates completely off the floor of the House.

To go back to my other point, we did not do that to legislation and we did not do it to ordinary bills. We did not say that anything other than estimates can be dealt with without ever being discussed on the floor of the House of Commons. There are no dollar items in the main estimates, of course, but when you put into the supplementary estimates dollar items which provide for amendments to the four statutes to which I have referred, you completely deny to the House of Commons the right that is guaranteed under the provisions, particularly about public bills, and any opportunity to discuss these matters.

I contend, Mr. Speaker, that this is an abuse of the rules, that this is an abuse of the rights of Parliament and that any rulings that there may have been about dollar items prior to the changes of the rules do not now apply. We are in a new situation; we are in a regime under which anything that is put in the estimates cannot be discussed on the floor of the House. I submit that for us to be handed a device under which amendments to four statutes of this Parliament are to be put through without there being any chance to discuss them on the floor of the House is an abuse of the rules and contrary to what we had in mind when we amended the rules two or three years ago, actually at the end of 1968.

As I have already said, Sir, I am not making a *carte blanche* objection to dollar items. I think that when a dollar item changes the description of an expenditure or of the way in which an expenditure already voted can be used, that it is proper, for that is in the field of estimates. But when something is tucked into the book of supplementary estimates and when that something amends existing statutes, then I submit it is wrong and we should not stand for it.

May I point out to you, Sir, that when Bill C-207 was first introduced and a point of order was raised by the

#### *Supplementary Estimates*

hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) because of its omnibus nature, Your Honour admitted from the Chair that your first look at that bill caused your eyebrows to be raised, because it was such a wide bill and had so many things in it. Your eyebrows must now be at the top of your head because, having had an opportunity to look at this booklet of supplementary estimates, you will have seen on the front of it the words "Supplementary Estimates (C) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1971." You would be expected to believe that the title is correct and that that is what is in it. However, you would find in it not only supplementary estimates covering the whole gamut of public administration, but these four cases in which existing statutes are to be amended. I submit that if Your Honour had some doubts about the omnibus character of Bill C-207, you must have serious doubts about this proposal, not just because it has a wide range of things in it but because it has something in it that does not qualify under the heading of supplementary estimates.

I should also like to point out to Your Honour that if these estimates go through in their present form, the day will come when you will lead us over to the other place to get Royal Assent to a bill. On the assumption that you will use the formal words you have always used on other, similar occasions, this is what you will say: "May it please Your Honour, the Commons of Canada have voted certain supplies required to enable the government to defray the expenses of the Public Service. In the name of the Commons I present to Your Honour the following bill: An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service for the financial year ending 31st March, 1971, to which bill I humbly request Your Honour's assent."

Now, Sir, if you make that statement, you will not be uttering an overt falsehood but you will not be telling the whole truth. Your statement will be to the effect that what you are presenting to the Governor General or his deputy for approval is a bill containing estimates, containing sums of money required for the Public Service. The whole truth would be that in this bill along with moneys for the Public Service there are amendments to four existing statutes. I do not think that this House of Commons should put Your Honour in the position of having to make a statement in the other place which, as I say, although not containing an overt falsehood will not be the whole truth.

• (2:30 p.m.)

If I were concerned about the rights of the Senate, which of course I am only in an academic or objective way, I would raise another point. Actually, if I were over there, and thank heaven I am not, I would object strongly to the way in which this bill denies the Senate the right that it has to discuss and amend ordinary legislation. The Senate cannot deal with our supply bills. It can only accept or reject them. It cannot amend them. By tucking these four bills into a bill covering supplementary esti-