

*Business of the House*

• (1510)

The Supplementary Estimates should be treated in the same manner, because what in effect is happening, especially this year, is that the government is altering in a significant way its budgetary appropriations.

In addition—and I wish the government House Leader would stay—he is fully aware that the government is not allowing some of the standing committees to operate. I use the Standing Committee on Transport as an example.

If the Supplementary Estimates are tabled tomorrow and they are automatically referred to the appropriate standing committees, and if the Standing Committee on Transport is not allowed to meet, how does Parliament have any process to review the government's estimates? We are denied the very reason for our existence, because we are here to supervise the estimates of the government.

**Mr. Benjamin:** We do not even have a chairman.

**Mr. Murphy:** Madam Speaker, if the government is unwilling to table the estimates in a manner that the opposition can reply, if the government is unwilling to allow committees to operate in such a way that they can review in detail these estimates, then we have to question the intent of the government.

I would also say, not in the way of a threat but in the way of recognizing the way things happen here, that if the government is not willing to co-operate with the opposition it cannot expect us to co-operate with it on other matters.

**Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke):** Madam Speaker, it is quite clear that by refusing to allow the opposition to raise questions on the tabling of the estimates tomorrow, the government is once again riding roughshod over the opposition in this House.

The Prime Minister and cabinet met and committed Canada to the Persian Gulf without recalling Parliament. Now, when they are bringing in estimates that are supposed to arrange for the payment of that project, they are again refusing this House the right to question the government in Question Period tomorrow.

It is just another example of the dictatorship we are seeing across the floor of the House.

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands):** Madam Speaker, my point in connection with the refusal that we are faced with on the part of the government today has to do with the rules under Standing Order 81.

As hon. members know, the final day for dealing with the Supplementary Estimates is December 10. That is the day on which the last supply day of the period must be held. On that day the supply bill will be introduced passing these estimates. They are deemed to be reported at least three days before that day, not less than three sitting days before the final sitting or the last allotted day in the current period.

If the government calls the allotted day of the current period before December 10, three days before that date, whenever that is, these estimates will be deemed back from the committee. They are going to be referred to the committee tomorrow. We know that, but we are not going to be able to ask questions on them tomorrow. They will go to the committees, and sometime next week some of the committees may meet to consider these estimates.

**Mr. Gauthier:** May.

**Mr. Milliken:** May. That is the shocking thing. There will be only two weeks left then effectively for the committees of this House to study these Supplementary Estimates.

We have been asking for these estimates to be tabled in this House for weeks and weeks. The government House leader has twiddled his thumbs and done nothing. Now he will be bringing them in tomorrow and does not have the decency to present them to the House at ten o'clock so that we can ask questions on them at eleven o'clock.

He makes up this phoney excuse that we need time to prepare our questions. We are quite capable of preparing questions in an hour, and very sensible questions. He may not like them. We usually make extremely good questions, and the hon. member knows it. It is the ministers who have difficulty giving the answers in this House. That is the problem. We can make up perfectly proper questions by eleven o'clock and be ready to deal with these estimates tomorrow in a fair and reasonable way.

I ask the government House leader to show some reasonable co-operation on this point.