

some question be put on the order paper which identifies the area of objection, and which permits the House to address itself by a vote to a question.

If one reads the notice of objection by the hon. member for Halton-Wentworth it is clear that the House could not address itself to such an item under the present rules unless the hon. member had put down a motion that the House direct that something be done in respect to that item. But that is not what has taken place. Therefore this seems to be the only feasible practice. If there is a better one, we certainly would welcome any suggestions which would clarify the position. At the moment, however, this is the only course which seems feasible.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): With respect, Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to appear argumentative, but what the hon. member for Halton-Wentworth did was in effect give notice to reduce item 10(b) from \$298,000 to \$100,000. Now, how this is expressed by the officers at the Table, I cannot say, but that is the intent of the motion. The intent is to reduce the item from \$298,000 to \$100,000. That is all.

Mr. Kempling: May I just clarify a point, Mr. Speaker? I approached the Table and asked for guidance on the proper form to use in order that I could register my objection. It was my assumption, perhaps wrongly, Sir, that by following their advice this matter would result in a vote. I took the advice of the Table and I was given an example, as a matter of fact, of a similar motion which had been put down in 1972. I followed that example and altered it only as to the particular circumstances and filed it with the Table at six o'clock. I assumed that with that direction the matter would then be brought to a vote.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Halton-Wentworth was correct in his course. The advice he received was right. As a result of the action taken by the hon. member, the method he used may in fact result in a vote taking place in the House on that separate item. But instead of it being a vote on a motion in the name of the hon. member for Halton-Wentworth to effect the item, it will be a motion by the President of the Treasury Board to concur in the item. But that is as close as the House can come under present practices.

I say the point of order is well taken; it is well understood, and it is one to which we have addressed ourselves many times. If there is a better and more direct procedure for achieving this goal I am sure the House would be happy to hear it. However, with all due respect, I do not believe the time to solve the problem is in this particular instance. The procedure followed with respect to this instance is precisely the same as that followed the last time around on supply.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): On the same point of order, if I may, Mr. Speaker, I came to this House—

An hon. Member: Too bad!

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): —in the belief that there was some democratic procedure we could follow in this House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Disposition of Supply Motions

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I have a point and I wish to be heard. There have been two supplementary estimates brought before us. I cannot understand why it is not possible, first of all, to have all the estimates required at one time. There have been As, now there are Bs. Next year there will be Cs. There will be three or four supplemental estimates.

The only alternative to the proposal put forward by my hon. friend from Halton-Wentworth is an amendment to the unopposed items in the estimates of March 22, which are here. We should be able to register our disagreement with certain items in the estimates, to have them withdrawn or removed. I will vote against them. But there must also be a method.

● (1800)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): I have a right to stand on my feet!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am prepared in these circumstances to listen to the point of order, but I think something should be made clear. The Standing Orders of the House provide a procedure whereby estimates are studied in the committee, amendments moved, and so forth, and if effective the estimates would be reported back to the House with amendments and then would have to be reinstated. I do not challenge the interest of the hon. member in raising this point of order; however the process has gone on for some time now. Undoubtedly there can be suggestions to improve the procedure, but it is a procedure that has been used several times in the past as a result of points of order.

The supply bill will be introduced today instead of tomorrow at the hour at which it is expected to be voted on. Furthermore, the supply bill will be debated in all stages tomorrow. This is moving further and further in the direction of getting away from the procedure we followed in the past. However, I wanted to be clear that at this moment the Standing Order is specific, that the duty of the Chair is to intervene and to put without debate or amendment all questions necessary to decide on the supplementary estimates that are before us.

The hon. member seeks the floor on a point of order. I have given three hon. members the floor on a point of order. Let us be clear that we should not be debating what we are doing, but continuing to speak about order, and if we are talking about improvements in the procedure for supply, these are procedures that have been not only in use for some time but in effect, in respect of these supplementary estimates which have been before standing committees, hon. members from all parties have been present there, have discussed them, have moved amendments to them, and so on, and at this point the final step is being taken.

The hon. member's point is well noted and continues to form part of the study which is going on to try to improve these procedures, but again I say that we cannot solve the problem entirely at this moment.