

*Point of Order—Mr. Andre*

be no amendment of existing legislation other than an appropriation act, since the relevant act itself would normally be amended.

I believe in the course of these comments I have covered the specific objections raised by the hon. member for Calgary Centre and the specific definitions which clearly fall within established precedent, a practice which has been carried on for many years. The guarantees the hon. member referred to are, of course, ones with respect to de Havilland and are within the program of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the IT&C votes. Industry, Trade and Commerce votes do require parliamentary approval, as do other votes. In the past this has always been obtained through appropriation acts in this House. So I submit that in all these items we are following precedent and the law.

● (1620)

I would like briefly to re-emphasize the importance with respect to vote 5c, which was the first item raised by the hon. member. It is a normal appropriation item in every sense of the word since it merely establishes an authority to spend a specific amount of money for a clearly specified purpose. Second, it is obviously not an attempt to legislate through the estimates, since it contemplates no amendment to existing legislation; it is simply an expenditure item.

So far as the income side of that equation is concerned, the levy itself will be authorized by legislation in this House, and hon. members will have full opportunity to debate that particular provision in committee and in the House.

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

**Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West):** Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order, which really relates to the rights and responsibilities of Members of Parliament to examine the spending plans of the government. It is a pleasure to follow the speech of the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston).

It is important to begin by pointing out to you, Madam Speaker, that in our normal daily lives, the fact that we have done a certain thing before, whether it is illegal or immoral, is no justification for continuing to do it in the future. The point of order raised by the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre) requires every consideration, and the previous practice of the government should not be taken into consideration in your ruling.

I want to broaden the issue raised by the hon. member for Calgary Centre. It is incumbent upon all hon. Members of Parliament to take responsibility for examination of the government spending plans very seriously. The Standing Orders of the House of Commons should be—perhaps they are not—clearly phrased so that we, as elected representatives of the people, responsible for trying to keep taxes down, can undertake that responsibility.

Madam Speaker, I believe that one of the unfortunate consequences of your assuming the Chair of this House is that sometimes you are not totally aware of what happens to those

of us who carry on the daily business of the House in relation to its standing committees. However, my desire to broaden this question is related to one of the Standing Orders of the House, in particular Standing Order 58(15). As it is directly relevant to the arguments I wish to make, I would like to read it:

Supplementary estimates shall be referred to a standing committee or committees immediately they are presented in the House. Each such committee shall consider and shall report, or shall be deemed to have reported, the same back to the House not later than three sitting days before the final sitting or the last allotted day in the current period.

I would assume that the terms of that Standing Order must be met or the estimates cannot be passed by the House of Commons. We are now reaching the end of the supply period. I can speak of my own personal experience. In that context, I want to re-emphasize the words “each such committee shall consider”. What they shall consider in this context is the supplementary estimates. Madam Speaker, you are well aware of the fact that the standing committees of the House of Commons are controlled by the chairman and the vice-chairman who, in almost all instances, are members of the governing party from which comes the majority membership.

I was appointed by the leader of my party to be the manpower critic in this House of Commons. Part of that responsibility is to sit as a member of the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration. When I examined the supplementary estimates, I found four pages devoted to a revision of estimates for Employment and Immigration, and two relating to the Department of Labour. It is the responsibility of the standing committee to consider those estimates, but it cannot consider the spending plans of the government unless the chairman calls a meeting. From personal experience, I can say that the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration has not called a meeting to consider the supplementary estimates of the Department of Employment and Immigration and the Department of Labour. I cannot indicate whether the same situation exists with respect to other standing committees of the House.

When I look through the supplementary estimates, I see that the Department of Employment and Immigration wants to change Vote 1c to move some \$2,621,999, which I presume is a saving, from one vote to another. I cannot tell the House with accuracy whether that is the intent and purpose of that vote because the standing committee has not met to consider this supplementary estimate. I suggest that it would therefore be illegal for this House to pass this supplementary estimate.

I draw your attention to Vote 5c contained in the administrative part of the supplementary estimates for employment and immigration. Again, the department wants to transfer the sum of \$5,535,999 from one appropriation to another. Once more it appears that there is a saving, but in fact the government wants to spend the money elsewhere. I cannot say whether this is the case because the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration has not yet met to consider the supplementary estimates. I think you will agree, Madam Speaker, when the government controls the chairmanship and the vice-chairmanship and has the largest part of the voting membership, that if the government is truly serious about its