

*Alleged Irregularity in Defence Estimates*

and shut case of privilege. It is quite clear from an examination of the estimates presented in previous years that provision in each case was made for the expenditures of the navy, the army and the air force. Certainly the house is entitled to a full disclosure of the sums to be spent for each of those services. This is the first time the estimates have been presented without any mention whatsoever of the three services. I suggest, therefore, they were prepared in this form on the basis of the hope of the Minister of National Defence of getting from this parliament the authority to create a single unified force.

That authority has not been granted, and the bill in respect of this unified force is still before the standing committee for consideration. It has not been reported back for consideration by the house. Under those circumstances the estimates should have been presented in the form in which they have been presented for many years past. This would enable members of the house to determine the amounts being voted for each of the separate services as provided for by the National Defence Act.

On looking back at the estimates of the Department of National Defence for the year ending in 1966 we find that vote 15 provided for the operation and maintenance and construction or acquisition of buildings, works, land and major equipment for the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army, and the Royal Canadian Air Force. The amounts involved were then listed, first for the navy, then the army and then the air force.

In looking at the estimates for the past fiscal year which ends in 1967 we find that the vote has been changed to some extent. In this case vote 15 is worded in this way:

Operation and maintenance and construction or acquisition of buildings, works, land and major equipment and development for the Canadian forces—

I noted this difference last year but paid little attention to it because the unification bill had not been introduced, and because following that description there were listed the expenditures for the navy, the army and the air force in detail, just as they had been listed for previous years. These details are to be found in the blue book on estimates at page 268 and following for the fiscal year ending in 1967.

I would take it that what the Minister of National Defence did last year was take a nibble at this business, and instead of the nomenclature of the vote being as it had been previously, to provide funds for the Royal

[Mr. Harkness.]

Canadian Navy, the army and the air force, that nomenclature was changed to provide for the expenditures required for the Canadian forces. However, as I say, I paid little attention to that because the expenditures for each of the forces were still detailed in the way in which they always had been.

But this year we find a complete change. Not only is the name of the vote changed from what it had been, but in the estimates which were presented to us yesterday there is no mention whatever of the navy, army or air force; and there is no means, by going over the estimates, of determining how much money is to be spent for each of these three services, which exist by law. As a result there is no means by which one can compare the expenditures proposed for this year with the expenditures of last year and previous years. Thus I think the estimates as presented quite palpably do not give the members of the house a true picture on the basis of which we are being asked to vote funds. Therefore they should be withdrawn and submitted in a proper form in accordance with the law as it stands.

**Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I am supporting the question of privilege and the motion that has been based on it. It is quite obvious that this is a really serious matter and is another indication of the methods by which the present government is attempting to evade parliamentary responsibilities and attempting to prevent parliament from maintaining its control over the voting of money in this house. We had an earlier experience of this type of thing when we were dealing with interim supply last fall. We discovered that the government had altered the terminology in one of the sections dealing with the Department of Finance and had placed into a contingency fund millions of dollars, whereas in other years they had been satisfied with a million or two. As I say, we discovered that last fall.

This, of course, put us on the alert as to what is happening in the year 1967, and immediately we discover another attempt to circumvent the will of parliament by altering the terminology in the estimates and the headings in the book of estimates, contrary to the law of the land. It is becoming a bit of a trial, watching day by day what the government is up to with regard to parliament. I am not normally very suspicious—

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