

*Privilege*

for specific purposes, does not possibly get away with some expenditure which would not be approved by Parliament.

Having said that, we are trying to argue that the House must now be apprised of a procedure, a procedure which I admit has not existed. We looked for a precedent and there was none. There was no time, in my research, that a government under the British parliamentary system voted down, by not being in the House, its own estimates. I cannot find one. I looked all weekend. As a matter of fact, I never read so much Bourinot and other authors. I could not find one example of a government wilfully, knowingly not being in the House to keep quorum on its day and letting the thing lapse. The Estimates have lapsed in our opinion so they have to be restored.

How do you do it, Mr. Speaker? There has to be a motion put to the House to restore what was done by the President of the Treasury Board on April 3, 1989. There has to be a restoration motion for leave that this House at its next sitting consider or continue to sit on the business of supply. I will leave it to the experts as to what the wording should be, but we need a restoration motion.

They will say: "The motion is going to be votable, because all motions have to be put to a vote, and it is not debatable". I want to argue that point. My friend from Kingston and the Islands will also argue, possibly more convincingly than I, because he is a lawyer of great repute and knows the finer points of the law. I would like to make some common sense arguments to this point.

The government has to restore that order and has to bring it into the House, and we in this House will want to debate that motion. Why do I say that we want to debate the motion? Let us go back to Standing Order 81(1) which states:

At the commencement of each session, the House shall designate, by motion, a continuing Order of the Day for the consideration of the business of supply.

It is common practice that the House is asked to appropriate the funds required to carry on the services and expenditures authorized by Parliament.

We go on to look at Standing Order 81(2).

[*Translation*]

I will read it in French:

On any day or days appointed for the consideration of any business under the provisions of this Standing Order, that order of business shall have precedence over all other government business in such sitting or sittings.

This is very important, Mr. Speaker. It means that opposition days have precedence over all other government business.

The importance of the business of supply is pointed out in Standing Order 81(2). They are given precedence over all other government business.

The government must give us 25 days a year pursuant to our Standing Orders. It does not have a choice. The day is designated not by us but by the government. We pick the subject but the government appoints the day.

In England, a Friday only counts as half a day as it is too short. Here when we get a Friday, it is considered a regular day of debate. We, on this side of the House, have difficulty finding three or four speakers for an important debate because the government is intent on trying to waste the time of the House.

It is totally unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, that this government is attempting not only to kill the time of the House but also to deprive us of our right to speak in this House. And it is for this reason that you should seriously consider the precedent of giving back to the opposition its allotted day.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote a few Standing Orders which, in my opinion, support restoring this item as well as debating the motion proposed by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret).

Mr. Speaker, I bring to your attention Standing Order 67(1) which talks about debatable motions.

The following motions—there are several of them, going from (a) to (p)—are debatable, and I quote:

Every motion:

(a) standing on the order of proceedings for the day, except as otherwise provided in these Standing Orders;

We know all about these, and I will dispense with them, but I wish to come to the very last type of motion which is debatable:

(p) such other motion, made upon Routine Proceedings, as may be required for the observance of the proprieties of the House, the maintenance of its authority, the appointment—

This is the part which I wish to emphasize: