

*Supplementary Estimates*

Governor in Council the right to enact legislation. I have objected in this House on many occasions to the idea of improper legislative items giving to various bodies the right to enact regulations which will grant very considerable powers, but when the government attempts to do this through a vote in the supplementary estimates it is even worse.

This practice has been condemned by political writers, by hon. members in the House and by people in many areas of the world. The government's attempt to secure the approval of this House and Parliament by this method is a shocking abuse of its powers. In addition to that, as has been pointed out recently in the other place and as I have indicated myself, it is very likely that this vote may attempt to invoke the provisions of the Canada Wheat Board Act. That act is limited in scope and dedicated to marketing grain in this country, and any attempt to defy the announced purposes and objectives of that act through this particular vote is iniquitous. The House should seek in every way possible to show its disapproval of this particular measure.

If Parliament had the machinery which was requested in October when the Committee on Statutory Instruments filed its report, and if there could be a careful scrutiny of this matter by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) as well as by a committee of this House, I should feel much easier. But this vote, which seeks in this legislative form to give the government the right to spend \$100 million, is so iniquitous that I can only express our views on it by moving an amendment, which I shall shortly propose. If accepted, the amendment would retain the vote but compel the government to bring in legislation to deal with this item.

Since the House first met last October, the government has known of the very serious situation in western Canada and appropriate legislation could have been introduced at any time if there had been discussions through the normal channels. Having examined the legislative record of the government during the last few weeks, I do not see why the minister or the government should now say, "We must proceed this way because there is not adequate time to do anything else." That does not answer the objection to the government's action in attempting to force this measure through this way. My views are reinforced by something very similar that happened in this House a few years ago.

I should like to refer briefly to Debates of the House of Commons of Canada for the

[Mr. Baldwin.]

1964-65 session, Vol. XII. At page 13131 of that volume is to be found an exchange involving the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), the house leader of this party at that time, Mr. Churchill, and the present Solicitor General (Mr. McLraith) who was then the government house leader. The government house leader at that time was attempting to secure the passage of supplementary estimates which contained items comparable to the item about which we now complain. At that time, the right hon. member for Prince Albert raised the issue that has been raised today and was supported by Mr. Churchill. The government house leader then said he would be happy to accept the proposals made and admitted that it was not right to attempt to legislate in this way. The government withdrew the items in question and undertook to bring in legislation at a future date.

I will not read from the report, Mr. Speaker, but what happened confirms the correctness of the stand our party has taken. I, therefore, propose to move the following amendment at this time, seconded by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees):

That all the words after "That" be deleted and the following added.

'this House declares that the bill contains a principle repugnant to this House inasmuch as Vote 17b of the Department of Agriculture, Supplementary Estimate (B), 1969-70, subverts the Message and Recommendation of His Excellency for the grant of supply, detailed in the Vote for the purpose therein specified, by attaching thereto terms and conditions which usurp the legislative function of Parliament and arrogate to the government an absolute discretion to distribute all or so much only of the said grant as the government sees fit and without regard to the principles of justice and equity and without a right of appeal by any farmer who may be aggrieved by the amount of any payment or by the refusal of payment to him.'

I submit this is a reasoned amendment by which I, on behalf of my party, indicate that my party has a special reason for not agreeing to the second reading of the bill. The amendment declares our opposition to the principle of the bill and its provisions. It is in that sense that I have moved it.

● (3:50 p.m.)

**Mr. Speaker:** I ought to say that the Chair has serious reservations about the procedural acceptability of the proposed amendment. I should like a few minutes to look into the matter further. However, at first blush, I fail to see how this reasoned amendment, if it is a