

considering the advice and counsel given by members, the Chair felt at the time that the only way this type of motion could be considered was on an allotted day as business of supply. It would be very difficult for the Chair to reach any other decision. When hon. members look at Standing Order 58(16) they will see it states:

There shall be no debate on any motion to concur in the report of any standing committee on estimates which have been referred to it except on an allotted day.

How can the Chair rule that there can be a debate on the report we now have before us on a day other than an allotted day as part of supply business? I think I would be remiss in my responsibility if I ruled in any other way. I think the House would embark on a rather dangerous procedure if, when we refer estimates to a committee and receive substantive reports on matters, which I think can legitimately be considered by the committee, we received reports and considered them from day to day under motions. The House would then turn not to the consideration of the regular business, and we would possibly never get to the question period from day to day if we were to consider these many reports with recommendations, very valid, I am sure, in many instances, but coming from the estimates committees where these committees are required substantially to consider and report to us on estimates.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and other hon. members have raised the point that perhaps this report is out of order in that it should not have been accepted at all. I am not prepared to go that far. I am not ruling whether the report is in order. But I am saying that if it has any validity at all it must be as a report of the committee on estimates, and therefore it should be considered as required by Standing Order 58.

I have some qualms about the work which is assigned to these committees, and particularly to the miscellaneous estimates committee. I see no reason why all or most of the estimates should be referred to that particular committee. I am referring to the supplementary estimates. I wonder whether, by agreement, there should not be some arrangement whereby this work might be spread over a number of committees—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker:—rather than heaping it on the miscellaneous estimates committee and its poor chairman who is then called upon to allocate time, perhaps with imaginative timepieces.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I am sure hon. members will have sympathy for the chairman of that committee. If they were placed in a like position they might feel they had to resort to that kind of extreme measure to ensure that all the estimates of the different departments are considered before the time the report has to be made.

For all these reasons I think hon. members will agree that it is perhaps generous on the part of the House to suggest that this particular report should stand as supply business rather than under the heading of motions.

Certain Motions' Position on Order Paper

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has suggested it is up to the members who are the sponsors of the motions under routine proceedings which are called from day to day to have them debated. I suggest to him that if he reads the ruling made on June 18 he will realize there would be considerable resistance on the part of the Chair to this being done. It was my impression when the ruling was made that there was at least a tacit understanding that these motions perhaps ought not to be where they are now and that certainly we should think twice before we embark by common consent and with the sanction of the Chair on the consideration of motions or reports of this kind from the committee charged with the responsibility of considering estimates.

For these reasons I hope hon. members will see their way clear to the accepting of the decision of the Chair to allow the notices of motions in question to stay where they are at least for the time being.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, may I raise a further point of order very briefly. I believe that the restlessness of the House and the motivation for the first point of order arise out of what has flowed from the ruling of June 18 and the inability of the House to express itself in respect of any particular item in the estimates. Because of what happened last June, when a committee of the House after due deliberation varied an item in the estimates and expressed the opinion of that committee as charged by the House to do so and the government then moved to restore that item, the House is denied, as a result of the ruling and the move by the government, an opportunity to express itself on that particular item. The House must accept a vote on the entire set of estimates rather than on an item.

With the greatest respect I suggest that was not the purpose of the rule when it was introduced. I was a member of the procedure committee which considered these matters. I was not happy with the abolition of the committee of supply and never have been. But, Mr. Speaker, hon. members have in previous years posted particular items in the estimates and the House was asked to express its views with regard to those items. Only twice have we been denied that. I would say that the frustration expressed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) in trying to move as he has on this occasion, and the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) and all of us goes back to this ruling that we cannot express ourselves with regard to any particular items. I would invite reconsideration of the ruling in June and the previous one and the practice of the House.

Mr. Speaker: I will not engage in a debate with the hon. member for Edmonton West, but the ruling of June 18 had nothing to do with the point now before the House. I appreciate the difficulty to which the hon. member has alluded. I realize the difficulty, but my suggestion in the past has been, and I express it again to hon. members, that perhaps the time has come for the House, or for the House through a committee, to look at the rule which hon. members feel has not been operating well.

But certainly the duty of the Chair is to see that the rule regarding votes on individual estimates as it is clearly written—perhaps it does not represent the intention of the