

Dollar Items

We have not had substantive arguments, and it seems to me this was the point Mr. Speaker was getting at earlier today. In order for him to come to a reasoned and substantive conclusion with respect to any item which is in dispute with regard to \$1 items, he would want to hear viewpoints from one side and from the other side of this House. He would want to hear from the opposition as to where they take specific exception to an item being dealt with as a dollar item, and he would want to hear the government's defence as to why that particular item should be dealt with as a \$1 item. On the basis of those arguments, Mr. Speaker would be able to come to a conclusion as to whether this is a proper procedure. In his ruling today Mr. Speaker emphasized that he did not have the benefit of those kinds of arguments, and therefore he was limited or restricted in coming to the decision which he handed down. He suggested to us a procedure to follow in the future in order to avoid that dilemma. As I said, I think that instruction from the Chair will be very useful in guiding the House in the future.

I think the essence of what Mr. Speaker said in his ruling applies with equal force to what has gone on in this House today, but more particularly in the standing committees as the particular items which have been complained about today and yesterday have been before those committees for consideration. However, what have we heard in those committees, and what have we heard in the House? Have we heard specific complaints about what may be wrong with the Export Development Corporation, what may be wrong with the National Design Council, or what may be wrong in any of the other eight or nine points which have been complained about? No, we have not heard specific objections about the difficulty the opposition envisages with regard to any of these points.

We have merely heard a complaint about procedure, and as these items come before us on allotted days in the House, and as they come before us in the standing committees, there are times when the estimates are being considered when the substance of these issues could be debated and when arguments either for or against could be put on the record, but despite the indignation we have heard from hon. members across the way today and yesterday they have not, in any substantial way, availed themselves of the opportunities they have had to consider these items in the standing committees to the extent to which they say they need to do that. I think that is rather revealing in terms of getting at what is the real motivation or objective behind the motion we are dealing with today. I think the answer must be obvious.

The real motivation is not a concern about what may appear in these \$1 items, because no member has directed himself to the substance of the \$1 items. That seems to demonstrate quite clearly that the objective is to stall, to delay, and to prevent the House of Commons from doing the work of the country. Having said that, I hope in the future there will be a more expeditious and co-operative attitude on all sides of the House in our efforts to do the work of the country, for which we were elected.

I know that all of us want to be guided by the very learned remarks of Mr. Speaker as to how he would like to deal with

[Mr. Goodale.]

the continuing discussion which we will, no doubt, always have about what is and what is not a proper item to be included in the so-called \$1 items in the estimates. I hope that all hon. members will take the recommendations of Mr. Speaker to heart. I also hope that all hon. members from this day forward will conduct themselves in this place with a determination to do what we were elected to do, and that is to provide effective leadership for the country and to deal with the issues of Canada in a current and topical way.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I find it regrettable that the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Goodale), who has just terminated his speech, has shown such a lamentable lack of understanding of the rules of the House. The general thrust of his remarks also showed a total absence of knowledge of what our procedures have been since 1969 when the so-called new rules were imposed upon this House as a result of the use of closure by the administration opposite, which totally changed the concept of the examination of estimates, abolished the committee of supply, abolished supply motions, and substituted therefor allotted days. That is the hairshirt which was fashioned by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) when he was President of the Privy Council, in putting together the system which is now operating.

The hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Sharp) pathetically bemoaned the nature of the motion before the House today. I would have thought that everyone would recognize that what the government has been doing is illegal.

I want to draw to the attention of the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council, of the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid), of the hon. member for Eglinton, and of any other hon. member on the government side that in 1971 Mr. Speaker Lamoureux ruled that such actions and legislative items without the authority of this House were illegal. It was made very clear that there was no authority for them. But have we seen the government pay heed? Gracious me, almost every year we have seen the attempts to get by, to slide around the corner and to see if they could not hide it under the rug. I would have thought that any responsible member would find it reprehensible that the administration would defy the rulings of the Chair by trying to put across this same thing time and time again.

● (1740)

Yesterday in the arguments put forward by the Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council he said that there have been many attempts in the past that have been sanctioned by the House. Technically the practice is wrong. There may have been some precedents.

This administration requires to be hit between the eyes with an iron bar, much the same way as you have to hit an ox between the horns with a two by four to get its attention. This is not the first time that this administration has been hauled up short. Twice, if not three times, an attempt was made to