

Act, 1867, was presented by hon. Sinclair Stevens (President of Treasury Board) and read by Mr. Speaker to the House.

[English]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 1979-80

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (President of the Treasury Board):** I am now tabling Supplementary Estimates (A), 1979-80, and have a message from His Excellency the Governor General signed by his own hand.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting Supplementary Estimates (A) of sums required for the service of Canada for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1980, and in accordance with the provisions of the British North America Act, 1867, was presented by hon. Sinclair Stevens (President of the Treasury Board) and read by Mr. Speaker to the House.

[English]

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Cape Breton Highlands-Canso):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order relating to the tabling made by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Stevens). Is he tabling the Main Estimates as we saw them in the last Parliament, unchanged; is he recommending them to the House, unchanged; or is he recommending the approval by the House of the spending plans of the former government which had ten months to run when he took over as President of the Treasury Board?

**Mr. Stevens:** The Main Estimates that I have just tabled, Mr. Speaker, are being tabled in identical form to the estimates that were last tabled by the former government. I have no further comment.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Is the minister recommending these estimates to the House?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Stevens) just said that he is not recommending the estimates to the House.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Throw them away.

**Mr. Chrétien:** That is a very unusual statement. I would like clarification from the President of the Treasury Board. If he cannot stand up to his responsibilities, perhaps he should resign immediately.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, it is vitally important to know, from the minister who tabled these estimates, whether the government and the President of the Treasury Board are recommending that the House of Commons approve these estimates—those words which were put in the mouth of the Governor General. Is the minister recommending these estimates for approval to the House?

*Privilege—Mr. MacEachen*

**Hon. Walter Baker (President of the Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the matter is an appropriate point of order, in the first place. It seems to be a matter which would be much more appropriate for the question period. If the opposition House leader and the hon. member for Saint-Maurice (Mr. Chrétien) have that kind of energy tomorrow, perhaps they can raise it at that time; I think that would be quite appropriate. As I understand the rules, the duty performed by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Stevens) was to table the documents. They have now been tabled. If there are questions about those documents, they can be put during the question period in the normal way. That, certainly, is not an appropriate point of order at this stage of the proceedings.

● (1230)

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I think if the President of the Treasury Board is not living up to the tabling of those documents on the recommendation of the Governor General, he should withdraw them right away. If he does not want to propose to the House that we approve them, and he does not approve them—he has been President of the Treasury Board since the month of June—what the hell has he done since that date?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order please. I will take the matter under advisement. The documents have been tabled; they rest with the House. I will take under advisement the effect of the action of the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Stevens) which has been to acknowledge that he has tabled the documents, and he has heard the representations about his own recommendation to the House. I will take the matter under advisement.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, I think that—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, on this question which goes to the very root of our parliamentary system, I have a question of privilege.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands-Canso (Mr. MacEachen) on a question of privilege.

\* \* \*

#### PRIVILEGE

MR. MACEachen—SUBMISSION OF ESTIMATES TO THE HOUSE

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Cape Breton Highlands-Canso):** Mr. Speaker, I heard the message from His Excellency. I do not have it before me, but as read by the Chair it stated that His Excellency recommends the spending estimates to the House of Commons. There is some doubt as to whether the Governor General received this advice from the government. On whose advice is he acting now, if the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Stevens) will not say that he is recom-