

*Supply—Veterans Affairs*

**Mr. Sinnott:** I asked for a ruling. Are you going to continue to allow the hon. member to read his speech?

**The Chairman:** I understand the hon. member is only using notes.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman:** I would ask the hon. member to make his statement brief and to the point.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** I want to do that, but I am being interrupted. The leader of the opposition used a strong word in characterizing this; he used the word "black-mail." I thought he was entitled to do so. Perhaps the member for Springfield would be interested in this. The dictionary says—

**Mr. Abbott:** He is reading one of Drew's speeches.

**Mr. Sinnott:** I don't read his speeches.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** I am reading a definition from the dictionary, and I want to be sure I have it right. The dictionary says that blackmail means "any payment extorted by intimidation." If the minister's threat does not come within that definition, then I do not know the meaning of plain English.

It is, of course, quite clear that the responsibility for any delay and inconvenience is the responsibility of the government and not of the opposition. By bringing down these items on the last day, the government added another to the long series of acts in disregard of the rights of parliament. There is no reason why the supplementary estimates should not have been brought down several days previously or even many days previously—

**Mr. Abbott:** They were.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** —so that there would have been no last-minute urgency. No one, of course, doubts the reason for this procedure, which is that governments do not like much discussion; and on this occasion the indications are inescapable that they were anxious to avoid embarrassing discussion of the foot-and-mouth disease.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** I shall refer to this matter a little later.

**An hon. Member:** What item are we on, Mr. Chairman?

**Mr. Howe:** I suggest that this is intolerable. The hon. member is completely out of order. He is making a political speech.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** Mr. Chairman, I am proceeding with your authority and with the consent of the house.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Howe:** He has not the consent of the house.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** Mr. Chairman, hon. members opposite are making this statement exceedingly difficult for me. I may say that it will be much shorter if they let me go through with it. There is not much more.

**The Chairman:** I understand that it is difficult for the hon. member to make his statement. I would point out to him that we are now on item 649. I would ask him to make his statement and to make it short and to the point.

**Mr. Sinclair:** And not read it.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** I am trying to make it short and to the point.

**Mr. Sinclair:** And not read it.

**Mr. Sinnott:** Put your catalogue away.

**The Chairman:** Order.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** Notwithstanding the unwarranted delay of the government, we indicated that we wished to cooperate, and on behalf of the opposition I suggested that the pressing items involving salaries might be dealt with first; but the government preferred not to accept that suggestion. Everything we did indicates our interest in the welfare of the civil servants.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Abbott:** Especially in Carleton county.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** We have a duty to our civil servants and we have sought to discharge that duty. I believe, however, that our civil servants will be the first to agree that we also have a duty to the heavily-burdened taxpayers of Canada.

I come now to the item affecting foot-and-mouth disease, which—

**The Chairman:** Order. I must ask the hon. member to deal with that item when it comes before the committee.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** Mr. Chairman, I go back to what I said at the outset. We are here today by unanimous consent. You have allowed me to go through more than half of what I wanted to say, and I do not think it would, if I may say this with deference, do any harm to allow me to complete it. I think it would be convenient for all concerned if I finished this statement now.

**Mr. Abbott:** I do not agree.