

Supply—Labour

The hon. gentleman laughs. That shows his intelligence; he does not understand anything. It would be a lot better if the minister would stand up and answer. The minister cannot do that. He should not laugh that way, because we have the right to know, and as long as he does not answer we will keep asking. I will keep the house waiting so that the minister will give his reply. Since the beginning of the debate the minister has tried to stop the opposition from asking questions, and is refusing to give answers to questions we have a right to ask. He has not the right to stop parliament by refusing to answer questions.

The Chairman: May I remind the hon. members that the use they are making of their desks is not quite parliamentary. Therefore I must ask the hon. members of the house to please refrain from this rather childish display which has been going on for the last five minutes.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, I think it has been rather a childish display on the other side in the serious way in which they approach the expenditure of public funds. What we asked the minister was a perfectly proper question, namely for a breakdown of an expenditure of \$100,000 which he is asking parliament to appropriate. In our request for that breakdown we asked him to give us information as to how this money is being spent, and through what private agencies it is being spent. But the minister said, "Wait for the public accounts a year from now". That is a strange constitutional position to be taken by the Minister of Finance, of all people.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I want to support the other speakers in this respect. As the leader of the official opposition has just said, the minister replied that we would get the details in the public accounts, which means a year after the money has been voted by this parliament. We in this group think that is an affront to parliament. We are entitled to know the details before we pass the item.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The hon. member is completely overlooking the fact that he is dealing with an appropriation. Parliament is being asked to provide this money. It is something new to have the government asked to give the details of expenditures when an amount is being appropriated for a purpose, only part of which amount has been spent. The proper and constitutional position, and the one which as far as I am aware has always been recognized, is that a breakdown of expenditure is given to the house in the public accounts after proper audit. What the house is now being asked to approve is the

[Mr. Caron.]

appropriation of a further sum for a purpose already approved by the house.

Mr. Chairman, the house had this matter before it at the last session, when it approved this type of expenditure in principle and approved the amounts that I referred to earlier. This is a request for sums in addition to those previous sums, and these will be fully accounted for to parliament. This is the first time that I recall a request being made for a breakdown of all expenditures made under the main item when a further amount has been asked for in the final supplementaries. I have already indicated to the house that this information of course will be given to the house, and if the house wishes this before this amount has been audited or gone through the Auditor General's hands or through the public accounts, this information can be given in the form in which it will be available to us when the money has been expended. But I hope I will not be asked to provide a breakdown of all expenditure when we are asking for an appropriation, part of which only has been expended.

Mr. Hardie: What do you base your appropriation on?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): It is based upon the expanded program which was asked for since parliament met last. Some of this expenditure has been made under appropriation, and we are now asking for this further sum to provide for the cost of the expansion of the program which has been undertaken through to March 31.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, the minister must know, as a student of parliamentary procedure, as well as a matter of constitutional propriety, that there is no difference whatever between a supplementary estimate and a main estimate in so far as procedure and constitutional practice are concerned. What we are being asked to do is to vote \$100,000 for a stated purpose. That money has to be spent presumably between now and March 31. It has to be spent between the day it is voted and March 31, 10 or 11 days hence. We are asking the minister to tell us how this money will be spent during that short time, through what agencies, and the names of those agencies. The very fact that there is a short time between this date and the end of the financial year, for which \$100,000 is being asked of parliament, surely justifies us in our curiosity as to how this money will be spent and in asking for the details.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Chairman, the hon. gentleman has misapprehended what I