

Ways and Means

nowhere in Canadian history will we find any occasion when the opposition has been denied the traditional right of bringing in an amendment to the budget presented by the Queen's minister of finance. And, Mr. Speaker, I argue with great respect that the partial budget statement that the Minister of Finance is going to make today is related to the budget. It is an interpolation of that budget, an extension of its terms and an explanation thereof, rendered necessary because of the dissolution of parliament and because of the emergency having arisen.

That is what I say Your Honour must do in giving a liberal interpretation to standing order 58. I suggest that this is a vital matter and I am sure that Your Honour so regards it. I suggest that Your Honour should stay in the chair. The only way that the opposition can bring forward an amendment to a budget, if it wishes to do so, is if Your Honour is in the chair.

I suggest to Your Honour that the interpretation I make of standing order 58 is one that in the circumstances is consistent with the standing order, and the only way out of the dilemma in which we find ourselves. If that interpretation is not made, then Your Honour unwittingly will have contributed to a situation in which for the first time in Canadian history it will be said that the opposition was denied the right to present a traditional amendment to the budgetary presentation of the government.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, may I say a word in reply to the hon. gentleman by way of correction of his argument, and then refer to two precedents. What happened last April, sir, was this. I brought in a budget presentation on the evening of April 10. The Leader of the Opposition spoke at the end of my presentation. He and I could both have had more time on that occasion but for the stifling intransigence of some hon. members in another group. He did not choose to move any amendment, but on Tuesday, April 17, he made a very lengthy speech on the budget.

Mr. Pearson: It was not on the budget.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Where do you suppose he made it, Mr. Speaker? He made it in committee of ways and means. He was discussing this very budget and he chose to do so in committee of ways and means and was not in any respect inhibited in so doing. It is true that, although we were in committee, I was prevented from replying because of the bedlam and howling set up by the Liberals opposite.

The following day, April 18, the then member for Burnaby-Coquitlam spoke on the budget for the New Democratic party. Where did

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

he speak? He spoke in committee of ways and means. So, Mr. Speaker, there is an abundance of precedent for the discussion of these resolutions in committee of ways and means by hon. members opposite, and that precedent could not be clearer.

But I said there were two precedents. May I refer briefly to those. One is in 1947 and the other in 1957. In 1947 a second session of parliament was called. It assembled on December 5. There had been what has come to be known as a budget by radio presented before parliament met. This was on November 17. To the house, the minister of finance presented a program for the prohibition of imports, provision for import quotas, permits and applications, and increased excise taxes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that was a very broad financial program. How did he present it? What procedure did he follow? Did he present a budget? Did he make a budget presentation where there were amendments, sub-amendments and debate? What he did was to introduce on December 11 a bill, not preceded by any resolution whatever. He introduced a bill respecting foreign exchange conservation. The next stage of that measure was on December 16, as reported at page 323 of *Hansard*, where he moved second reading. Debate proceeded on second reading, without any resolution whatever.

Then, Mr. Speaker, on December 19, 1947, as you will see if you look at page 535 of *Hansard*, with respect to the application of the increases in taxation, the excise tax, there was no budget. The minister of finance moved that the house go into committee of ways and means, exactly what we are doing here, sir. The house agreed. There was no debate. It is just what we are doing today. There was no budget, no amendment, and no sub-amendment. So much for 1947.

Then, let us go to 1957. What happened in that year? There had been a budget presentation in the spring. When the house met, a new house, following a change of government, there were requests from hon. members for another budget. Well, Mr. Speaker, on December 2 the Prime Minister said that there would be no formal budget. On December 6, in committee of supply, I made a statement. I first of all conducted a very brief review, pointing out the revision of the estimates for the balance of revenues and expenditures. Then, I gave a statement on certain measures which the government would bring forward.

Then, as reported on pages 2022 to 2024 of *Hansard*, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) raised a point of order. I give him credit for having put his point with characteristic thoroughness. The objection taken, sir—there had been, of