

Business of Supply

motion expires at the end of the day, and we have also provided otherwise with respect to non-confidence motions on allotted days. But we have made no such provision with respect to these three special days for supplementary estimates which have been added to the business of supply.

Therefore, now that debate seems to have ended, I submit that Your Honour ought to put to the house the question whether it wishes to concur. There may be no vote. After all, members of all parties were on the committee of the house that examined this matter, and agreement on many items was unanimous. It may be that we shall not come to a recorded vote, but I submit we have the right to test the will of the house.

It is also clear, I submit, that with respect to these three special days that have been added to the business of supply there is provision for us to vote against some of the estimates if we wish to do so. There is even provision for us to vote on the first or second reading of the supply bill to be based on these estimates and on the separate clauses. If there is the right to deal with the business of supply in that manner during these three days, I submit we have also the right to vote on the motion the hon. member for Peace River has moved. I support the principle that we take such a vote at this time.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, may I make a brief comment on the point that has just been raised. Your Honour will recall that last week, when we were considering the possible procedure for these days, I made representations to you indirectly that these were not allotted days and that under no circumstances could they be considered as such.

The motion that has been posted is that this house do concur in the supplementary estimates. The argument has been made that we should handle these three days as if they were allotted days. It is true that these are days on which estimates are being considered but, having heard the argument of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, I agree that they are not within the 25 allotted days. It is clearly spelled out in the rules that there are only 25 allotted days. Of course, one must determine what is meant by "allotted days". In my view, however, none of the procedures that apply with respect to allotted days applied here. We do not have the 24-hours notice for opposing or, shall we say, restoring or amending any item in the estimates. That is not required under the present procedure.

We have here a procedure arising from the fact that the house made an order that these estimates were to be considered in committee for three days and in the house for three days. We shall consider an appropriation bill and it will go to committee where it will be dealt with on the basis applying to any other bill. There is a special procedure under which we set aside three days for final supplementary estimates. I put it to Your Honour that if a transcript of our discussions in the procedure committee were available you would see that it was contemplated there would be a special procedure for final, supplementary estimates. What is now developing is in accordance with that thought.

Therefore I put it to Your Honour that we can take a vote. A vote should be taken on the motion moved by my colleague, the hon. member for Peace River, after which we could proceed with the motion of the President of the Treasury Board. As I indicated previously, a difficulty would have faced the Chair and the house if the motion of the President of the Treasury Board had been put at the beginning of this afternoon's proceedings, because there is no way of disposing of a motion before the house except by voting on it. The house cannot entertain two motions at the same time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I did not attend the meetings of the committee to which this matter was referred. However, having listened this afternoon to those who spoke before me, I understand that this is a substantial point which should be considered, so as to study seriously all the matters dealt with.

As a result, there is talk of putting this motion to a vote, and from the views expressed so far, I understand that if there is a vote, the minister's proposal will be left out. So, I believe that we should get back to the matters dealt with earlier and we should ask ourselves once again if the house has not sufficiently recognized the fact that items are transferred in the estimates without its having anything to say or its exercising any control.

In my opinion, this a matter of principle and we should examine the problem very carefully. That is why I endorse fully everything that was said by the hon. members for Peace River and Winnipeg North Centre. I think we should devote still more time to a debate on a major principle that has already set a precedent but which is being amplified