

Inquiries of the Ministry

quite a lengthy question and the minister to make quite a lengthy answer. I think that should be satisfactory to both parties. Orders of the day.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Mr. Speaker—

An hon. MEMBER: Ah-h-h.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: That interruption was the most intelligent statement the hon. gentleman has ever made. I rise on a question of privilege.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I am not a bit disturbed. I have the same rights as any minister.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I asked the minister a question and in reply he made a political speech. I have a right to point out that there was no justification—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I would ask the hon. gentleman to be kind enough to abide by the rules. He has put his question and he should be satisfied with the answer.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Again on a question of privilege, sir, the rule you applied should be applied equally to the government benches in this house.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I would ask the hon. member to be kind enough to retract what he has just said.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I have nothing to withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Reflection on the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I would ask hon. members to be kind enough to cooperate with the Speaker, one of whose principal duties is to protect freedom of speech in this house. I would ask hon. members to allow the hon. member for Lake Centre to give the explanation he wishes to give; but before the hon. member rises I would ask him again to be kind enough to withdraw what he just said about the Speaker.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Mr. Speaker, I made no suggestion about you. My hon. friends over there—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I am explaining. My hon. friends over there have a way of
[Mr. Speaker.]

trying to prevent us over here from saying anything, by trying to howl us down. What I said, sir, was that we have the same rights on this side of the house as have any members on the government side. There was no suggestion about Your Honour.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Withdraw.

Mr. MUTCH: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman who just resumed his seat made a statement which is not in accordance with the facts and impugned every hon. member of this house.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. MUTCH: Just a minute, now. That is what he did when he said that we on this side of the house have attempted to howl down any member of the opposition. Some of us may have tried to insist that the same rule which applies to the rest of the house shall apply to the distinguished member and others in the opposition.

Mr. HOMUTH: Are you talking for a ministerial seat?

Mr. MUTCH: Over here there is a chance; over there, none.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I consider the incident closed; but I want it to be thoroughly understood that the hon. member for Lake Centre has said that he did not impute any improper motives to the Speaker.

SUPPLY

Hon. DOUGLAS ABBOTT (Minister of Finance) moved that the house go into committee of supply.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee of supply, Mr. Macdonald (Brantford City) in the chair.

INTERIM SUPPLY BILL

Mr. ABBOTT moved:

That a sum not exceeding \$95,969,200.11, being one-twelfth of each of the several items to be voted as set forth in the estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1948, laid before the House of Commons at the present session of parliament, plus an additional sum not exceeding \$5,853,666.66, being eight-twelfths of the amount of item 485 and nine-twelfths of item 610 of the said estimates, a total of \$101,822,866.77, be granted to His Majesty, on account, for the fiscal year ending 31st March, 1948.

He said: The committee will recall that the house has already granted interim supply covering one-sixth of all the items in the main and supplementary estimates for the current fiscal year, and an additional one-twelfth of certain other services of a seasonal