

Supply—Transport

Mr. Pickersgill: I should be very glad to do that right now, Mr. Chairman, if hon. members would give me another five minutes.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, I do not think that would be good for the study of the estimates. It would mean we would start this discussion all over again on the other items. It would be better to leave the questions that have been asked and to which we just need answers.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Chairman, I was asked a question a few moments ago. I think there is an appreciation on the part of all hon. members in the committee that some method should be found for having a full examination of all the items but at the same time being able to do so within the fiscal year. We have spent two weeks and one day discussing the estimates of the year almost past and have succeeded in passing the estimates of only one department so far. There are the estimates of some 25 departments to be passed. I would hope we could find a workable system that would have the estimates for 1965-66 adopted by the committee, particularly in view of the fact that the estimates for next year have been tabled in the house—

Mr. Starr: That has nothing to do with it.

Mr. McIlraith: —that the standing committees have been appointed and we are operating under new rules which will mean that those estimates will be referred to standing committees for examination. I think that will provide a better way for getting information about departmental activities. I am wondering whether we could not come to some consensus in this committee to make more rapid progress consistent with members obtaining the information they feel they would like to have about the various departments.

Mr. Starr: Mr Chairman, with regard to the matter raised by the government house leader, we in this party stopped debating the first item of these estimates two hours ago, or perhaps two and a half hours ago, in the hope that the first item would be passed and we could then question the minister on the items following the first one. However, I see no sense in carrying on and trying to be co-operative when the minister himself takes up half of the time of the whole debate. He has just finished speaking for exactly one hour, and this was one of the 34 or 35 times he has been on his feet. I do not believe that is necessary. I appreciate the fact he made a

[Mr. Knowles.]

very nice speech, but he should have made that speech at the beginning of his estimates, and probably that would have eliminated a lot of the speeches that were necessary. This is the point I want to bring out. You can get the co-operation of the opposition if you do not try to talk out your own estimates.

Mr. McIlraith: I want to point out that I had a very careful analysis made of those who have spoken on these estimates up until noon today. While I may have an opinion about some taking too much time or some taking too little time, I do not believe that opinion would be of any interest or concern to the house. I believe that we have to operate on the system where each member has a right to ask whatever questions he believes are appropriate on these estimates, and the minister must be given an opportunity to answer.

In the final analysis, there are two effective checks of any abuse of this system. The first one is the common sense of the hon. member and the second is that at election time the voters will leave at home any hon. member who does not use common sense.

An hon. Member: A lot of your people did not do that.

Mr. McIlraith: I could retaliate with certain comments about hon. members opposite, but I do not believe that would serve any useful purpose. I am not going to do it. I am quite sure each one of them could reply in kind. This would get us nowhere. I appeal again for hon. members to give some thought to the problem that is confronting this house, and ask them to try to find a way of meeting the problem. If they have any ideas to put forward certainly I, as house leader, will be glad to hear them.

Mr. Douglas: We have tried to get this first item passed for the last ten minutes. I see very little value in lecturing the committee if we are willing to pass the item. I have not heard any objection to passing it, provided we have the assurance that we will be able to discuss these questions on other items.

The Deputy Chairman: Shall the item carry?

Mr. Starr: We are prepared to pass it now without any further word being spoken, but if there is anyone else who wishes to participate in this debate then we have four or five members whom we have asked to co-operate by withholding their speeches. If others are