

Supply—Agriculture

should like to know precisely what inefficiencies were found in his department by the Glassco commission, what has been done already to correct them and what more is planned. I am sure the farmers in particular would wish us to find this out on one of the rare occasions when we get a chance to ask about these things in parliament. When the committee next meets I hope the minister, if he has not the data right ready to give us now, will be prepared to give it on item No. 1 so that it can be discussed and so that we shall know what we are really talking about when we are talking about these estimates.

Mr. Hamilton: I should like to correct the hon. member immediately. These estimates under review would ordinarily have been brought before the house last January or February and passed for spending in this current year. However, owing to the delaying tactics of the opposition last session, we were obliged to go to the country and get a decision. I wish to be absolutely clear on this point. These estimates were prepared last fall, a year ago; and the Glassco commission had no more thought of reporting at that time than of flying. I am simply pointing out that to raise such an issue is simply to introduce a red herring which has simply no bearing on what we are discussing today. We are discussing something that should have been discussed ten months ago.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I certainly do not intend to allow that tissue of misrepresentations to pass uncorrected. There was absolutely no obstruction. There was no possibility of obstructing these estimates last spring, as the government chose to have an election instead of bringing the estimates before the house. How could you obstruct something that was not even there last spring? That is the first point. The second point is this. This parliament was elected on June 18. The writs were returned before the end of July. These estimates could have been discussed and dealt with in the month of August if the government had not been afraid of meeting parliament. It is ridiculous for the government to suggest for one moment that anybody else except the government, by its refusal to meet parliament, by its refusal to accept its proper responsibility, is responsible for any delay there is. Two months of the precious time of this parliament were wasted in August and September when parliament could have been meeting, when parliament should have been meeting, when the Leader of the Opposition was demanding that it meet, and when anybody with any regard for the rights of parliament or for self-government would have had it meet. For this government who put the

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

session off until they ran out of money—and this parliament would not have met yet if they had had more supply; they put it off until they ran out of money, and then had to come crying to us to give them nine twelfths of estimates that have never been voted because of their own negligence, because of their own refusal to call parliament when it should have been called—for this government to talk about other people obstructing, is the most shocking thing imaginable. Only the Minister of Agriculture, who speaks one day as a private individual and depreciates our dollar to 90 cents and another day wants the farmers to assume the responsibilities the government previously undertook could see such a curious reflection in such a distorted mirror. Only yesterday we were told by the Prime Minister that many of the recommendations of the Glassco commission had already been carried out. If they have already been carried out, they affect the estimates for this year, not for next year. If nothing has been done in the minister's department under the Glassco commission—nothing whatever—if he tells us that, then that disposes of the matter, if he tells us as minister and not in some private or personal capacity. We do not know any more in what capacity this minister or indeed any other minister speaks, as they speak with so many voices, depending on the time and the circumstances. We have the Minister of Public Works with one story about the Columbia river, the Minister of Justice with another.

Mr. Ricard: Stick to order.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am sticking to the point raised by the minister and nothing but the point raised by the minister. As I understand it, what the minister has told us is that the report of the Glassco commission had nothing whatever to do with his department. I would be astonished, judging from the tenor of most of the rest of this report, if the Glassco commission had not looked at the most luxuriant crop that the minister has produced, namely the crop of information experts, and if they had not asked themselves how many of these experts were serving the farmers and how many were serving the Tory party while paid for by the taxpayers. I suggest that the minister read the Prime Minister's statements once in a while. He is so intoxicated by his own speeches that he apparently has not time in which to find out what his colleagues are saying. I suggest that he read what the Prime Minister said, and that he try to keep in step once in a while—just once in a while—just pay a sort of lip-service to the idea of cabinet solidarity on which our parliamentary system of government is supposed to be based.