

Supply

ment be given from the Committee of the Whole House on this occasion since we do not have the list of the three members at this particular time.

• (1640)

Pursuant to Standing Order 54, I do now leave the chair for the House to go into Committee of the Whole on the said bill.

House in committee on Bill C-141, to grant to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service for the financial year ending March 31, 1973—Mr. Drury—Mr. McCleave in the chair.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, may I rise on a point of order for the purpose of getting clarification as to our procedure? I believe it is generally understood that there is a desire on the part of hon. members to discuss the different items set out in the schedule. My experience tells me there are two ways to do this: One would be either on Clause 2 or Clause 3, one of which mentions the estimates and the other mentions the schedule, to call the schedule and start with agriculture and go on through it. The other procedure would be for us to go through all the clauses, there being five of them, then call the schedule, taking department by department in an alphabetical order.

It seems to me that nothing turns on which way we do it, but I think we should have a clear understanding. I think there is a general desire to get into a discussion of the estimates of the different departments. If that is the case, perhaps when Clause 2 is called and before it is carried the chairman might call the schedule referred to therein and then take it department by department.

The Chairman: The Chair would appreciate the views of the hon. members on this important point raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. It has been at least 10 years since we have gone into Committee of the Whole to deal with the estimates, so it is perhaps worthy of a moment of reflection.

If it meets the wishes of the committee, my own inclination would be to start with the schedule and begin with the items under agriculture, and then when that is exhausted proceed to the next topic and so work our way through the schedule. We would then come back to the clauses. I am quite prepared to hear submissions as to how we should proceed in a manner that is most agreeable to hon. members.

Mr. Drury: Mr. Chairman, on this particular point of order I think it might be more convenient if we were to deal with the clauses and then with the schedule, thus enabling us to summons the necessary ministers who are not, as you see, available in the House at the moment. If the first minister required is the Minister of Agriculture it might take us some time to get him here. I suggest we might deal with the clauses, and go on with the schedule on the understanding that each of the scheduled items will call for the presence, if needed, of the minister.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Chairman, we on this side would much prefer the suggestion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. While the Minister of Agriculture and his

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

officials are on the way here, I am sure there are members on this side who will be participating in the debate in a general way and will not require the presence of the officials or the minister during their remarks. For the sake of order, I think it would be much more preferable to proceed in the manner suggested by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): On the same point of order, Mr. Chairman, in looking at Clause 2 and Schedule A, I find myself at a loss in determining how one could debate Clause 2 without dealing with some of the matters dealt with in Schedule A. In actual practice, I feel that the suggestion by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is the only one that can be followed.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the point made by the President of the Treasury Board that the Minister of Agriculture is not here at the moment. I am sure it will not take him very long to come here unless his office is a lot further away than it ought to be. I point out, however, that we have one or two members waiting to speak on matters relating to agriculture. I suspect there might be a Conservative member who wants to talk about this as well, so the Minister of Agriculture will be here before the item is carried.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, under the circumstances I think we would agree to proceed in the way the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has indicated. That would be acceptable.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, may I ask one further question? Do you intend to proceed simply by calling agriculture and letting the debate range over both the items therein, and then going on department by department, or do you prefer to call each item? Again, my only interest is in knowing how we are going to proceed.

The Chairman: I think the Chair would go along with the mood of the House to consider matters at an early stage by dealing with them by department rather than on a breakdown within departments. I propose to do that, so we will be calling Clause 2, Schedule A, dealing with agriculture Votes 15a and 40a under agriculture as the first part of the debate.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): You are a wise Chairman.

Mr. Nielsen: For the purposes of further clarification, I take it that the calling of the items under the various departments in this fashion will not preclude the general rule of practice in this House, that is that on Clause 1 there will be the fullest possible range of discussion?

The Chairman: What I propose to do is reach a conclusion of discussions under each item within a department without calling the vote until the discussion is completed on the schedule, and then deal with the point raised by the hon. member for Yukon, if it should arise, after the schedule has been carried.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Chairman, it will not arise at all if we call Clause 1 of the bill, because this permits that kind of