

*Supply—Citizenship and Immigration*

upon it as our right and also, I may say, because of the impartiality and fairness of the Chair.

There is more required in relation to parliamentary control over the purse than that parliament should be informed. I used the words of the Minister of Justice himself as recorded at page 1042 of *Hansard* for February 9, 1956, when he said that it was parliament's job to perform its function of the control of expenditure mostly efficiently and effectively. As a matter of fact, the Leader of the Opposition used the word "effective" three or four times and I took it that he had been reading the speeches of the minister. That is the key to this whole business. It is not just a matter of parliament being informed by a method that is almost secret. It is a question of parliament having effective control over expenditure, and you do not have effective control just because a sessional paper gets tabled, about which very few people learn in any event.

The Minister of Finance also spoke on this point as recorded on page 1651 of *Hansard* for February 28, 1956, as follows:

We have drawn attention to the fact that it is a paramount duty of the House of Commons to maintain strict control upon government expenditure. The control of the public purse must be exercised by the House of Commons.

These were the sentiments of the hon. gentlemen opposite when they sat on this side of the house; not just that parliament should be informed of the actions taken by the government by order in council, but that the parliament of Canada, the House of Commons, the representatives of the people, should have effective control over those expenditures. Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, we have had that effective control down through the years.

As I have already said, we have reached a turning point in Canadian parliamentary history. This government is taking us around the corner to a new way of dealing with governor general's warrants and of dealing with expenditures by order in council and is laying down the pattern that this can be done merely by informing parliament afterwards.

I suppose if it were not for the rules governing our procedure generally we should be obliged to have recourse to the newspapers to find out what the government is doing. We have got away completely from the proposition that there has to be effective control by means of supply estimates always being tabled so we can vote on them.

The Minister of Justice, despite what I told him when I was on my feet earlier, continues to try to make a great deal of the fact that I did not press this aspect of the point

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

on Thursday night. He also tried to make a great deal of the fact that I did not raise the point when we were discussing the estimates of the Minister of Veterans Affairs. May I say this again, just as plainly and as simply as I can, Mr. Chairman, that I am not in the habit of raising issues in the House of Commons until I am sure of my ground.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): If hon. gentlemen opposite would like an example, they may recall the occasion in February, 1957, when Mr. Howe made a statement in this house on a Tuesday regarding certain share options in a certain company which we will not name today. I knew at that point that there was something fishy about it. But when did I raise the matter on the floor of parliament? It was on the following Monday, though I ran the risk of the Tories getting ahead of us. Why did I wait? I waited because I spent the intervening days running down my facts, because I wanted to be sure of them.

I was not sure on Thursday night whether the minister would cover this item by a supplementary estimate. And there was something else that I did not know until yesterday. I appreciate all the nice things that are said about me because of my interest in parliamentary procedure and my habit of perusing all the documents, but I am humble enough to stand up in this house and say I am still learning things, and I did not know—I say this again to the Minister of Justice, and I say it to the House of Commons—until yesterday that this had never been done before. It was only yesterday, after I had received this letter dated January 31, from an official of the government with a document attached to it, that I learned that on all previous occasions this had been done the other way; that it had been done by means of supplementary estimates being brought in afterwards.

I say again to the minister that on Thursday night, when he and I were discussing this matter, he may have known that this was a new pattern, but I did not. It came to me as a shock. It came to me as a surprise yesterday when I received this document and found out what the facts were. Oh, it is true that I could have found it out if I had pursued this branch of research in the course of months gone by, but it was not until after Thursday night that I discovered that this pattern was an entirely new one and that I realized that this government had taken parliament around a corner which is extremely serious as far as parliamentary control over public expenditure is concerned.