

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Chairman, on the same point of order—and I have raised this on other occasions—it would seem that tonight we are asked to approve things which have not been approved by the committee. We may be operating under the rules of the House, but I do not think half or three quarters of hon. members on all sides of the House really know what this bill is about. I would call it the biggest financial abortion ever to hit parliament.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: An illegal abortion.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Order. If the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) rising on the same point of order?

Mr. Fortin: I am rising on another point of order, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

The Chairman: In reply to the hon. member I must say that I hope he is not reflecting on the Chair. This is a procedure which has been established by hon. members in the House of Commons, and it has to be followed by the Chair in the Committee of the Whole.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin: The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Chrétien) has explained very briefly Section 5(1) which pertains to the power to borrow \$4 billions for public works or general purposes. Does the Minister mean that he is empowered to borrow \$4 billion at an interest rate he cannot divulge for works that have not been approved by the House?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Chairman, this is an authority to borrow in the usual ways of the government. I said in my preliminary remarks on this bill that each committee will have the opportunity to make a detailed examination of those supplies and that the passing of this bill not prejudice in any way the members' right to ask questions about those expenditures when the ministers appear before the committees.

[English]

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, my point of order deals with clause 2(b). Could the President of the Treasury Board explain the urgency in having to pass eleven twelfths of this amount tonight, bearing in mind that there has been absolutely no committee review of this item whatsoever?

● (2230)

Mr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member, under the guise of a point of order, is trying to ask questions of the minister. Surely our procedure is that when we proceed with the bill members can put their questions. It is the practice, under the Standing Orders, when the main estimates are before committee—

The Chairman: Order, please. Shall clause 2 carry?

Interim Supply

Mr. Alkenbrack: Mr. Chairman, I have just one brief question for the President of the Treasury Board. On page 10 of the bill there appears item No. 10 under the Department of the Secretary of State, "Bilingualism Development—\$106,845,000." May I ask if this sum is for expenditure in the public service only?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Chairman, the rule is that these questions will be asked in committee.

Mr. Woolliams: After you have spent the money. How ridiculous can you get?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Chairman, I am just following what has been the tradition of this House for years. I have guaranteed the right of the hon. member to ask those questions in committee. He just wants to put on a show tonight, and he wants to be president of the committee when—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Chairman: Order, please. The hon. member for Calgary North on a point of order.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a question of privilege. They can laugh and shout over there but they are spending \$4 billion or \$5 billion of Canadian—

Some hon. Members: Order, order!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woolliams: If they think I was elected to put a rubber stamp on that kind of procedure, they are wrong. If the President of the Treasury Board thinks I am going to endorse that nonsense he is wrong.

An hon. Member: Oh, sit down!

Mr. Woolliams: The members of the government know it is a farce.

The Chairman: Order, please. I think if hon. members would take their seats for a few seconds it might be worth while to read the Standing Order. We do not sit in committee of the whole on supply and interim supply very often so maybe hon. members should be reminded of Standing Order 58(10), which reads as follows:

On the last allotted day in each period, but, in any case, not later than the last sitting day in each period, at fifteen minutes before the ordinary time of daily adjournment, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings then in progress and, if those proceedings are not in relation to a no-confidence motion, he shall put forthwith successively, without debate or amendment, every question necessary to dispose of any item of business relating to interim supply,—

I have no choice but to invite hon. members to abide by the rule and not raise questions in the guise of points of order. Hon. members may have disputes and may disagree with the way we have to operate, but I have no alternative than to apply the rules. If hon. members have good and valid points I am ready to accept them, but if points of order are raised to seek information and ask questions, I have to consider them out of order. The hon. member for Moncton.