

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

of the two departments in which governor general's warrants were used namely those of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. It would have been very easy to defer these two departments and to have left them until some time later in the year. Then perhaps we might have been subject to the accusation that we had attempted to deny parliament the opportunity to discuss this matter and to express its approval. We did not do that; we brought the estimates of the two departments to which I have referred before the house and we have now spent four hours—or at least three—in discussing this matter of giving to parliament a full opportunity, which it should have and which we intended to give it. Indeed we would never have sought to withhold from parliament the opportunity to express its approval or disapproval of what the government did at the time or of the course now being followed by the government. If in the course of three hours the hon. gentleman or any other hon. gentlemen feel they have not been able to make a point, then, sir, I suggest that the responsibility is theirs and not ours. Furthermore, the question of the responsibility for wasting the time of parliament is also theirs and not ours.

We are prepared, of course, to discuss this matter for as long as hon. gentlemen wish to do so, because that is their privilege, but the longer they take on it the more they emphasize the fact that parliament is being given the full right to discuss this matter and to express its approval or disapproval of the conduct of the government.

The longer they spend in talking and the longer they defer getting down to grips with the issue, that much longer will we see repeated the history of the whole session to date, namely the raising by the opposition of phony issues and trying to impede the course of the government and then, when they have the opportunity to meet the issue head on, of ducking and running for cover.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): First of all may I correct the minister's arithmetic and then I will deal with his logic. We started to discuss this matter about fifteen minutes before one o'clock. We had fifteen minutes on it before lunch and we have been in session about one hour and a quarter since lunch. According to my arithmetic that makes one and a half hours.

Mr. Fulton: I am sorry. Listening to the hon. member makes time pass slowly.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): That is the first time the minister has scored today and I will let him have the credit. I am

interested in the minister's reference to this as a phony issue. I think he has chosen just about the worst day in this session of parliament to refer to the question of parliamentary control over public expenditure as a phony issue.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We will see about that. In the early part of his remarks just now the minister misquoted something I had said earlier. He referred to my conversation with a friend in the press gallery whom I had quoted as saying, "We did not run a story on that."

Mr. Fulton: That is what I said you said.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The minister said that was a reference to what was discussed on Thursday night and that my motive in re-opening this issue today is that it did not reach the press as a result of it being discussed on Thursday night. The minister was not paying the attention to me that he usually pays to debates in this house. I said that my friend in the press gallery was referring to the sessional paper tabled last October 15, when he made that remark. In other words, my press friend was drawing attention to the fact that the device used by the government to inform members of the house as to what had been done was most ineffective. Nobody knew about it except perhaps the Minister of Finance who tabled it and the linotype operator who set the necessary lines in *Votes and Proceedings*.

The whole point is that this machinery we now have for the tabling of documents, which was revised the last time we had a meeting of the committee on procedure, makes it possible for documents to be laid on the table and there to be missed completely so far as the public is concerned. It does so happen that this one instance came to my attention and that is why we are now having a debate on it.

The minister made the point that we are now dealing with the matter of what the government has done and he says that we have ample opportunity to discuss it as long as we wish to do so. Has he forgotten that before the luncheon recess he raised a point of order and tried to stop me from discussing it?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Was that apostle of free speech, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, here when the Acting Minister of Citizenship and Immigration made that move to try to prevent a discussion on this item? We have had this discussion only because some of us have insisted