

The House accordingly resolved itself again into Committee of Ways and Means and, progress having been made and reported, the Committee obtained leave to sit again at the next sitting of the House.

STATEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: A moment ago when the Minister of Finance rose and indicated that he had the right to reply to what he considered to be a substantive motion, namely the one that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself again into Committee of Ways and Means, I indicated that I felt sure enough of my opinion not to allow him to use the right of reply and I did say he did not have such a right.

When the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) indicated that it should be made clear that the motion to go into Committee of Ways and Means in this instance is not a substantive one I indicated perhaps it is not that clear.

I think that a point can be made both ways. One can make a very good argument to the effect that this is a substantive motion and that the right of reply should be attached to it. There is only one motion that is in use under our rules traditionally, for the purpose of presenting the budget especially now since our rules have been changed and, since a substantive motion is a self contained proposition which is amendable, this is the case with respect to this type of motion.

The other argument is that a substantive motion should not be incidental to any other proceeding. If one looks at the theory behind a motion to go into Committee of Ways and Means one must begin with the Speech from the Throne where His Excellency tells the Commoners:

"You will be asked to appropriate the funds required to maintain the services and payments provided under the authority of Parliament."

This is a command to us which we have translated into a standing order, S.O. 55, which is to the effect that as soon as the Address is adopted in obedience to this command we appoint the Committee of Supply and Committee of Ways and Means which must remain open until all the business to be dealt with in those two Committees has been completed. Therefore the motions to go into Committee of Ways and Means or to go into Committee of Supply are merely incidental to the standing order pertaining to the creation of these Committees and their functioning and in turn this procedure is adopted in relation to the command that is received in the Speech from the Throne at the beginning of every Parliament.

Of the two opinions I have spoken about I prefer the latter and I am convinced in my own mind that it is the right one. The only reason I did not say it was so clear because I think and the Clerk agrees with me—we have been discussing this at some length—that a good case could also be made to say that this particular motion for the budget presentation is a substantive motion and the right of reply should be attached to it. But I would rather leave it as my opinion that it is the other way around. The other argument I presented is, I think, better.

Citation 294 is to the effect that by custom the second reading of a bill is construed to be, for the purpose of the right of reply, not a substantive motion, but one to which the right of reply is allowed. That is only by custom. At one time it was expressed in our standing orders that second reading was also to have the right of reply but it has been taken off and continued by custom.