

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry. Perhaps, in my own words, I could interpret what has happened. It takes some time to prepare all these items contained in the estimates, and it was expected that this government organization legislation would have been passed by now, or certainly would have been at a more advanced stage. So, all of the items which are presently administered under Fisheries and Forestry are under the heading "Environment" in the blue book.

Anyone who reads the second page of this bill will see references to fisheries, forestry, wildlife, water, meteorology, and so on, are presently under Fisheries and Forestry, but the branches, divisions and agencies of which will be transferred to the department of the Environment if that name, as presently printed, is retained in the bill. If the amendment now before the House is accepted and the department is called fisheries and the environment, these estimates would have to be reprinted under the heading "Fisheries and the Environment".

Mr. McGrath: But I do not have the right to anticipate that parliament will pass my amendment.

Mr. Davis: I would not bet on it.

Mr. Whicher: May I remind hon. members that although no department of environment exists as of today, it is equally true that these estimates will not take effect until April 1, 1971. They are for the period from April 1, 1971, until March 31, 1972. I know members of the opposition want to get on with the business of the House in a businesslike way, and surely they know it takes a long period of time to print a book such as the blue book. I suggest that the civil servants have been working on these estimates for almost a year and a half. Hon. members must give the government some consideration when criticizing it. In their opinion, on April 1, 1971, in other words, a little over one month from now, this new department will be called the department of the environment—

● (4:10 p.m.)

Mr. McGrath: The government has no right to make that change.

Mr. Whicher: If the House wishes to change the name and to say to the government, "You are wrong," this is the time to say that to the government. I suggest that we had better do it in the next five minutes, because we shall never have a better chance in our lives. The government must take the responsibility for what happens, as must this Parliament which represents the people of Canada. The House can say to the government either, yes or no. So, I say to my hon. friends to my left, we have been considering this bill for about 13 days; let us get on with the business of the House. The hon. member for South Shore said earlier that the passage of this government reorganization bill will be very slow indeed. What he did not say, but what he meant I am sure, is, "If you do not bow to our wishes." In other words, Mr. Chairman, he is threatening not only Parliament but the people of Canada, who are asking us to get on with the business of running this country.

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Government Organization Act, 1970

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Whicher: Let me say in conclusion that the people of Canada are not interested in the kind of nonsense that some hon. members are bringing forward this afternoon. Some hon. members have threatened—

An hon. Member: That is a reflection.

Mr. Whicher:—to talk for the next 30 or 40 days if we do not do as they wish. May I remind hon. members that there are many serious problems in Canada which need to be tackled. The government wants to tackle them and we backbenchers want to tackle them. We are a little sick of arguing whether a department should be named this, that or another thing. If hon. members do not like the name that is proposed, they may bring in an amendment as they have done. But let us not talk for one week; let us have the vote and get down to business.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Chairman, I have not participated previously in this debate. With all respect may I say to the hon. member for Bruce, who may have imputed motives to hon. members, and may I say to the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry as well as to the hon. member who sits muttering in his seat and who says more when sitting down than when standing up—

An hon. Member: What is the point of the hon. member's remarks?

Mr. Nowlan: I am coming to that. I say that the argument with respect to the point of order does not hinge on the name. It is not whether the name ought to be the department of fisheries, forestry and the environment, or the department of the environment, fisheries and forestry. That is merely the catalyst for the point of order. My hon. friend from Bruce says, "Let us go on with the business of the House; the people want Parliament to go on with the business of the country; let the committee get on with its business." I agree. Every Member of Parliament wants to carry on the business of the House and of the country, according to the laws of the land.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nowlan: The point of the matter is not the name that is being discussed; as I say, that was the catalyst for the point of order. If one were to follow the logic of the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry, as he is now called, and of the hon. member for Bruce, we might as well close shop. Since the government can anticipate the expenditure of X dollars with respect to all sorts of departments, it need not come back and ask for more money. The argument of the minister and of the hon. member for Bruce, if accepted, would tear to shreds something we know as supplementary estimates. I know, as does the hon. member for Bruce who sat in a provincial body before coming here, that the government cannot cross all the "t's" and dot all the "i's" with respect to any department's expenditures for one year. It cannot be that accurate before the production of the blue book. Provision must be made for contingencies; the depart-