

Business of Supply

supplementary estimates in the ordinary way. If I am wrong, I hope someone on the other side will correct me.

• (4:30 p.m.)

With regard to the use of this technique to bring about legislative changes, I think it is highly dangerous to make use of such an informal method. If this parliament is going to authorize a new procedure that permits legislative changes in this informal manner, then this procedure should at the very least be carefully defined. Who is to draw the line between the kind of legislation that is considered sufficiently minimal in importance to be proceeded with in this way and, on the other hand, the kind of legislation that is sufficiently important to be dealt with in the way we normally expect legislation to proceed through the house? I have no wish to exaggerate and if I am wrong I hope I will be corrected, but I regard this as a very sweeping change in the rules of the house without any proper consideration or authorization being given to it.

I think we have to regard this matter as a serious one. I do not accept for a moment that the changes that are being made by parliament are going to give this house more control over the expenditures of the government. I think they will give the house less control. I can only assume that this is a deliberate move in this respect on the part of the government.

I have also said that the government is making changes in the rules of the house relating to the passage of its legislation without such changes receiving the proper consideration of parliament. The government has just taken it upon itself to make these changes without prior discussion. I do not think this is a proper way to proceed. I will regard with a little more sincerity the protestations that have been made on the government side of the house that members opposite are anxious to facilitate the giving of information to the house and to safeguard the control of the house when I see that the Auditor General really is independent of Treasury Board and can go ahead and get his own staff, with some more adequate way of enabling parliament to pass judgment upon the matter, instead of having him hemmed in by the Treasury Board without our knowledge.

There are ways, important ways, to obtain increased control by this house, and the Auditor General is one of these ways. Far

from increasing the control of the house, the proposed changes we are now contending with will have the result of reducing the number of the estimates, and the general behaviour of the government will obviously lessen the ultimate control of the house of the expenditures of this government.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I rise not to participate again in the debate; whether or not I would be entitled to do so, since this is a substantive motion, is beside the point because I am rising on a point of order. I wish to lay before Your Honour and the House the question of the procedure that might now be considered in order to bring this matter to a conclusion. I do so with more readiness since we have agreed that when the consideration of the supplementary estimates reaches the stage of the appropriation bill we will deal first with the housing items that appear in the supplementary estimates.

In response to a question of mine on Thursday or Friday the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) indicated that he wanted to be in the house to deal with this question. He is not here, though I make no point about that. However, the issue I am now raising may well want to be considered by your Honour after hearing members' views, and I suggest that after the question has been debated Your Honour might wish to devote some time to it and we might consider an adjournment.

The question I ask is whether or not a vote is permissible—and I am not indicating that our party is going to move for a vote on this particular motion. We are now treading in the uncharted waters of the new rules. This is the first time we have dealt with supplementary estimates since introducing the rules changes. It is quite certain that this motion is not a non-confidence motion. There is no question about our urging that it be considered a non-confidence motion. My original thought was that a vote might not be possible, that is to say, a vote where the house divides.

Reference to Standing Order 58 (3), (7) and (11) raises some doubt on this score. Certainly the three days are not part of the 25 days that are allotted to and divided among the three so-called semesters. In these cases you either have an allotted day on which you can move a non-confidence motion, limited to two in each semester, or you can move a motion that is not a non-confidence motion but is simply used as a peg upon which the relevancy of the debate will be considered.