

*Supply—Finance*

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** It was pressed by the government. If the hon. member chose to oppose it that was perfectly all right. That is his right as a member if he chooses to do so, but let him not say that the government did not press this measure. We did. We pressed it for nine different days until it was finally disposed of.

Next was the point raised by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River who had something to say about the staff in the office of the Minister of Finance. If he will look at the statement I made in reply to his question on July 12, page 7937 of *Hansard*—

**Mr. Benidickson:** It was not my question.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):**—he will see that the personnel in the office of the Minister of Finance when the former government went out of office numbered ten and today the number is eight. I quite accept the point that the Minister of Finance in matters like this should try to set an example. I will do my poor best to try to set a good example.

I think these are my observations, Mr. Chairman, on the dozen or so points that have been raised in the discussion.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Chairman, I assume I will now be allowed to deal with the matter with which the Minister of Finance has dealt. I have in my hand a chronology of this famous Bill No. C-72 which I thought it would be useful to bring here because I expected the customary misrepresentation of this matter by the Minister of Finance.

It happened that this measure was mentioned in the speech from the throne on November 17. It will also be within the memory of hon. members that the speech from the throne was disposed of in two days. If this was the most important job-producing measure that the government had—it was about June that the Minister of Trade and Commerce started saying it was, though they did not make any such claim for it in the early days when it was being debated—why did they not bring it in on the 19th or 20th or 21st of November and give it priority, as they did to one or two other measures, and get it through the house before Christmas?

The plain fact is that the government did not attach any special importance to it before Christmas at all. As we know, the Minister of Finance went on one of those junkets of his to Europe and delayed his baby budget until two days before the Christmas adjournment. That was not our fault. That was the fault of the management of the government. There was no reason why that baby budget should not have been brought down immediately after the speech from the throne was disposed of if the

government had had its business ready and if it was so important. Therefore the delay from November 17 or say November 20 to December 20, one month, was entirely due to the government.

The resolution never came before the house until February 1. There was a big gap. Day after day we kept asking the government to bring it forward. The hon. member for Laurier and I said, "Please bring it on". We wanted to debate it but the government did not like the debate. They did not enjoy it. It took place from February 1 to February 3 and then for 12 days the government refused to bring the measure forward. After the 15th of February another 12 days went by before it appeared again. The government sets the business of the house, not the opposition. I think at that time the minister had gone on a junket to Vancouver. I think he went out to see Mr. Bennett but Mr. Bennett slipped through his fingers and he had to go off to Chicago or somewhere. On one of these occasions that is what happened.

Then the matter came up again relatively soon after that on March 2 and it was discussed on that day. On that same day the bill got first reading. That was March 2. The debate on second reading of the bill did not come up until April 17, over a month and a half after it was given first reading. That is not the fault of the opposition. The government would not even bring forward this great measure that was to produce all this employment for second reading for a month and a half after it got first reading.

As a matter of fact, it took only two days to get second reading and it was not brought up in the Senate right away. I do not blame the government for that, of course, because that was the time of the Easter recess. The bill we brought forward in the Senate in April, and on June 14 the Senate indicated its views with regard to it. The bill was not brought before the house again until July 6. Again that was no fault of the opposition. That was no fault of anyone on this side. It was simply mismanagement of the business of the house by the government.

In the face of that record I say that for the minister to get up and say that it was the opposition and then the Senate that delayed this thing is just a perversion of the facts. I suggest that it would have been much better if the minister had just left the statement of the hon. member for Laurier and had no more to say about it because, as the hon. member for Laurier has indicated, the government realized, in the light of the almost unanimous opinion across this country about the bill and its arbitrary features, that they had made a dreadful boob and that the bill when compared with the Prime Minister's

[Mr. Chevrier.]