

Question of Privilege

There is, and there has been, a denial of our right to discuss these further supplementary estimates. I also say, having regard to the statement made by the Prime Minister, that we will not be given the immediate opportunity to discuss a matter which has been before the house quite recently, and I say too that the government cannot pay this \$138 million until an appropriation bill has passed through this house.

If we are to have responsible government in this country the government should bring the supplementary estimates before the house. That is our fundamental right, and the government should explain—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member has not finished, but I find difficulty in seeing that the point of privilege which he raises has yet arisen. It seems to me he is anticipating. What basically is involved is the right of the government to order its business in the way it thinks appropriate. No one will disagree with the proposition that the government of Canada cannot spend money without the concurrence of parliament, but what I am concerned about is whether the hon. member can relate his question of privilege to something that has occurred, or is he entirely anticipating something that will occur?

Mr. Churchill: It is a bogus question of privilege.

Mr. Chevrier: Yes, Mr. Speaker. There is this fact that nine days have elapsed since the fiscal year ended, and from statements made by the Prime Minister outside this house, and from the statement which the Prime Minister has made this afternoon, it is quite clear that we are not going to be given an opportunity to deal with this matter now.

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. member is asking me to make the assumption that the government will not behave in a constitutional way. I cannot make that assumption in advance; therefore I see no substance in the argument at this time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I had not completed my remarks.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Perhaps I should let the hon. member conclude, but I have told him I see no substance in his argument.

Mr. Chevrier: Well, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to conclude.

Mr. Speaker: When the hon. member has concluded I shall hear the Prime Minister.

[Mr. Chevrier.]

Mr. Chevrier: I thought I had laid the basis for a motion which I intended to make. I now move, seconded by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate, that the house do now proceed to item No. 16 of government orders for the purpose of exercising the time-honoured and fundamental right to control the expenditures of the Queen's ministers in accordance with the principles of responsible government.

Mr. Jones: An abuse of the English language.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): The moving of that motion, Mr. Speaker, just indicates the limits to which the opposition will go. They realize full well—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Chevrier: The motion has not been put.

Mr. Speaker: I have heard the hon. member for Laurier make a proposal which he claims raises a question of privilege, and I dare say the Prime Minister would wish to comment on it, which he is entitled to do.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The hon. member rises on what he calls a question of privilege. Then he proceeds to make statements that are without basis in fact, and he ends up with a motion that is entirely out of order. Motions have to be moved in the proper way, and so far as his present allegation is concerned, no government has ever been obstructed in the manner in which this government has been and is being obstructed by the opposition on supplementary estimates. Outside the House of Commons these hon. gentlemen are forever challenging an election, but inside the House of Commons they are sitting in fear.

Mr. Chevrier: It is certainly not fear of you.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Over and over again—

Mr. Hellyer: Tell us another good joke.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Over and over again they have had the opportunity to deal with supplementary estimates. They covered the estimates in general. Then the supplementary estimates were introduced and we had 19 days on the earlier supplementary estimates and we have had four days on the present ones. We have allowed them to go on and on.

Mr. Pickersgill: Allowed them? The dictators.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That was not the kind of treatment the opposition got when those gentlemen were over here. They introduced the closure of debate. They trampled on the opposition. We have allowed them—