

Supply

Another point of confusion is, if we take these votes on notices of opposition that Procedure will not be quite correct because we do not vote on notices of opposition. We vote instead on the positive motions put down by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury). If we do have these votes, with or without debate, then the House, not the committee, will have made a decision. If the vote is negated, that is the end of the estimate. However, if the vote is in the affirmative, the House will have taken a decision and we will likely have trouble later on if members at second reading or in committee of the whole try to debate the various estimates.

These confusions, in my view, support the proposition that the whole provision for notices of opposition was designed to fit into one situation only, namely that occasion where, on the last allotted day in a period or on the last sitting day of the period, we are faced with the necessity of dealing with the estimates without debate. In that situation, we have the right to put down these notices of opposition and get recorded votes on any estimates about which members are concerned.

May I emphasize that in taking this stand, and I am sure my hon. friends in the Progressive Conservative party who put down these notices of opposition will realize how true this is, I am not interfering in any way with their right to have votes on the nine items to which they seem to be opposed, either in whole or in part. If these motions are not voted on, but instead we proceed in the normal way and have the second reading debate followed by committee of the whole, which would include a consideration of the schedule attached to the bill, they would be able, once that schedule is called, to single out every one of these nine items and any other items, move amendments that they be reduced to \$1, move amendments that they be deleted or force votes on them. In fact, they would have much greater freedom in committee of the whole with respect to these items than they would have by taking votes now. If votes are called now, they cannot say a word, at least if we are under Standing Order 58(10). If the votes are taken now, Your Honour will have to rule that they be taken right away without debate. However, if we do it in committee of the whole, they can expand their reasons. They can get around the problem that is created by the faulty wording of the motion that it be reduced to a certain amount and so on.

At third reading, if they are not satisfied with what happened in committee of the whole, they can move a motion to have the bill referred back to committee of the whole to delete any of the items to which they may be opposed. I hope hon. members will believe me when I say that the purpose of this intervention is not to deny to my friends to the right their desire to debate these estimates or vote on them, but rather it is out of a desire that our procedures not become mixed up and confused.

As Your Honour and hon. members who have been around for awhile will recall, this is all new. This procedure was adopted in December, 1968, and came into effect in 1969. This is the first time this particular kind of situation has arisen. In almost all cases since the beginning of 1969, we have dealt with the estimates under what is sometimes called the guillotine of the last day. It was under that last day guillotine that we exercised the right

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

to put down these notices of opposition. We have done it ourselves. Every time the estimate for the Senate was there, I put down an opposition motion and we got a vote on it. It is too bad there is not a Senate item amongst these votes. I could make a little speech on it.

The point is that today we are not operating under Standing Order 58(10). We are operating under Standing Order 58(18) which puts this supply bill in the category of being a normal government bill to be dealt with in government time with no time limit and no restrictions on debate. Therefore, I think the matter should be resolved in that way. Instead of dealing with these notices of opposition or the motions of the President of the Treasury Board, we should simply follow the provisions of Standing Order 58(16), have a motion to concur in the committee report, then bring in the bill and proceed with the bill as an ordinary bill on second reading, through Committee of the Whole and, finally, to third reading.

• (1530)

Mr. Nielsen: I do not see the same confusion as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre apparently sees in these notices. He suggests to Your Honour that the notices have been poorly drawn. I took the trouble to do some research on the procedure which has been followed since the introduction of these new rules. I followed precedents set by members of the hon. member's own party in the preparation of these notices. I shall be referring later in detail to a point of order which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre raised in this House on June 22, 1972. This is to be found at page 3415 of *Hansard* of that date.

Ordinarily, in my submission, the House would be proceeding under Standing Order 58(16) if we were to follow the full intent of the committee on procedure which brought forth the rules which were finally adopted by the House. We would be proceeding in that way because there would have been an established pattern which was spoken of in the Special Committee on Procedure which originally recommended the changes we finally adopted. I want to refer Your Honour to the proceedings of that Special Committee because I think it is necessary to go back that far. No doubt Your Honour has already dug them up. They are to be found in the *Journals* of December 6, 1968, at pages 429-464. These explanations for the rule changes appear at pages 430 and 434. I wish to review, just for a few moments, the proceedings referred to in the short report of the committee.

The reforms related to supply procedure which are embodied in the recommendations contained in the fourth report of your Committee are based upon a number of crucial principles and assumptions which it would be convenient to list.

Your Honour will note the word "crucial" in that context.

(a) A pattern of regular parliamentary sessions is assumed whereby a session would normally commence in September or October and the House would rise for the summer recess on or about July 1.

We are not in that situation today. The Special Committee on Procedure made that assumption, and on the basis of that assumption came to what it called a value judgment founded on a number of crucial principles. These crucial principles, in my submission, relate directly to the