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JOURNALS

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OF CANADA

OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 1971

2.00 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS

RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: Perhaps at this point I might refer to the motion offered by the honourable President of the Privy Council on Monday and indicate the conclusion I have reached after giving the matter much thought.

On Monday last, when the President of the Privy Council offered a motion under the provisions of Standing Order 59 to send supplementary estimates to certain standing committees, the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) raised a point of order regarding the propriety or, if one wishes, the legality of considering supplementary estimates which were in effect amendments to existing statutes. The honourable Member for Edmonton West argued along the same lines. In support of the motion, the honourable President of the Treasury Board claimed that his proposal was amply supported by precedents. He referred to certain guidelines which he suggested should be looked at by the government when proposing such items and suggested that the proposals were entirely within those guidelines.

The Minister is right of course when he suggests that the introduction and passage of statutory items in sup-

plementary estimates is not an innovation in this House. This is a practice which goes back many years. At the same time, it has never been accepted readily by the House. Our debates record many instances when Members have taken exception to the practice. The honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre himself is not a neophyte in this regard. For example, on March 31, 1952—if he does not mind my going back so far—as reported at page 969 of *Hansard* of that day, he voiced strong objection to an item in the estimates which, he contended, would circumvent section 3 of the Atomic Energy Control Act. Another example of such objection is a statement by the then honourable Member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings who stated in part as follows: "You have statutes; you may repeal them; you may amend them; but you cannot do it by supply bills."

Another random selection was picked from page 3,368 of *Hansard* for March 27, 1961, where the then honourable Member for Kenora-Rainy River went on record to oppose this practice, and called as his witness the then absent honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre. Again, on April 1, 1964, as reported at page 1,680 of *Hansard* a similar discussion arose.