

Interim Supply

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I realize one must not quarrel with a statement of the Chair but the supply bill we passed was for 1974-75 and these are interim estimates for 1975-76. There is an explanation, but it is a better one than this.

Mr. Speaker: Is the said motion adopted?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Chrétien thereupon moved that Bill C-55, for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 1976, be read the first time and printed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the said bill be read the second time? By leave, now?

Some hon. Members: By leave, now.

Mr. Chrétien thereupon moved that Bill C-55, for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 1976, be read the second time and referred to the Committee of the Whole.

● (2220)

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I want to know, without getting into debate, whether the minister will give the usual and traditional guarantee with regard to the moneys to be covered by the interim supply bill and if, in doing so, he will explain to us the provisions of clause 5.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I will give the explanation when we are in committee of the whole.

Mr. Speaker: It is the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Laniel in the chair.

On clause 2—\$4,603,596,900.59 granted for 1975-76.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Chairman, the appropriations requested in this bill are intended to provide for all necessary requirements of the public service up to June 30, 1975. In no instances is the total amount of an item being released by this bill. The form of the bill is the usual one for interim supply bills. The passing of this bill will not prejudice the rights and privileges of members to criticize any item in the estimates when it comes up for consideration in committee, and the usual undertaking is hereby given that such rights and privileges will be respected and will not be curtailed or restricted in any way as a result of the passing of this measure.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, in reply to the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), I would like to say that item 5 constitutes the not unprecedented power to borrow up to

[Mr. Speaker.]

\$4 billions. We can trace back in similar bills passed in previous years a borrowing power and if my information is right, this power to borrow \$4 billions is completely in accordance with the Standing Orders.

[English]

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. May I just point out that the schedules referred to in the resolution are the schedules that are attached to this bill.

Mr. Chrétien: The hon. member is right.

Mr. Stanfield: Of course he is right, he is always right.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, my point of order is that the House should have a further explanation as to why the items covered in clause 2(b) are in fact being carried to the extent of eleven twelfths of the total estimate.

Mr. Chrétien: Which one does the hon. member refer to?

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, I am referring to clause 2(b), the eight twelfths of the total of the amounts of the several items in the said estimates set forth in schedule A, \$120 million. This is an additional eight twelfths on top of the three twelfths which are passed in clause 2(a), so with respect to the estimates set out in schedule A we are passing tonight, eleven twelfths of the total estimate. I think that is virtually replacing any meaningful committee review of these estimates, and a further explanation should be given.

Mr. Chrétien: I think that the hon. member referred to Clause 2(a) and (b), and I think he referred to eleven twelfths. That is really in reference to annex (a), and the first one is agriculture. For his information the program is production and marketing, loans to finance the construction of an exhibition building. This additional eight twelfths is requested to meet substantial progress payments for projects in western Canada and eastern Canada.

Mr. Baldwin: You've gone to the metric system.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. I hope that we can keep to the point of order because it is my duty, according to the rules which we operate under at this stage of committee of the whole on this bill, to see that there is no debate. The hon. member can ask questions for procedural information, but I would not want to have a debate carried on from one side of the House to the other.

Mr. Chrétien: On the point of order, Mr. Chairman, there are a few items like that. I cannot enumerate all of them. They are in the Schedule. They are advance payments which we need right away because on those few programs we have to advance the money right away. We need the authority of the House to make those payments. The payments will be in the fiscal year 1975-76, but the payments here will be made in the first quarter of the year. That is why we are asking for the authority to spend nearly all the money, not three twelfths but eleven twelfths of it.