

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

namely to inform parliament of what it had done by governor general's warrant and to give to parliament the opportunity to discuss it, which opportunity parliament is now taking.

On the question of whether or not parliament can express its censure of the government, whether or not parliament has the right to disapprove of what was done, let me point out to the hon. gentleman that there is the fullest opportunity throughout the whole course of these estimates. There is an opportunity before the hon. gentleman now—and he knows how to take advantage of it if he thinks this is a real issue—to indicate approval or disapproval of what was done by governor general's warrant and of the course we followed and which we now follow and for which I and my colleagues have no apology whatsoever.

We have respect for the rights of parliament. We have laid information before parliament what was done. We have preserved that traditional right and opportunity to parliament to censure us if it wishes to do so. What we have done is to avoid distorting the estimates in the way the hon. gentleman suggests that we should do by including moneys which should not be, in my submission, in the estimates because they have already been spent under the authority of the governor general's warrant. I submit to you that it would be asking parliament to make a duplication of effort to include the governor general's warrant in the vote now before the house.

I should like to deal for a moment with this question of the rights of parliament and whether parliament has the opportunity to express its approval or disapproval of the course of the expenditure. When the Leader of the Opposition earlier this afternoon said that we were, in following this course, seeking to evade our responsibilities, I could not help thinking that no one here is asking to be allowed to evade any responsibilities except the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal party who have sought to evade their responsibilities ever since the beginning of this session. They have evaded the responsibility of meeting the government on any real issue. They have ducked and run to cover until they thought there was an issue raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre which they could use to redeem themselves from the disgrace in which they were plunged by their previous course. We are therefore left in this position. When we took office last June we found that the authority for spending money to provide assistance, transportation and accommodation and other necessities for the Hungarian refugees and

[Mr. Fulton.]

for the other very heavy immigrant movement into Canada had lapsed and we were faced with the position of either allowing those immigrants to starve, cutting off the assistance to the refugees whom we had undertaken to receive, or of using a governor general's warrant under the authority provided in that behalf. We took what I think will be agreed was the sensible, the courageous and indeed the decent course and we used a governor general's warrant to the extent of \$2,428,000.

Let me remind hon. members and you, Mr. Chairman, that it was not our fault that the authority had lapsed. We did not have the responsibility at the time when the continuing authority for the expenditure of money should have been arranged for. No. Hon. gentlemen opposite, who raise this hue and cry, had the authority, and they were careless or else they did not know how to arrange it. But, for whatever may be the reason, the authority lapsed and we were faced with a situation which we met in the only way that was open to us; and for that course we have no apology to make.

Then we were faced with the question of bringing the matter before parliament and we tabled the order in council at the earliest possible opportunity. The order in council came to the knowledge of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and I daresay to that of many other hon. members who do what most hon. members do, namely look at the sessional papers which are tabled from time to time outlining the orders in council that have been passed.

We knew that the estimates of the department were to come before the house, and when the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre says that parliament has been denied the opportunity to deal with this matter and of expressing its approval or disapproval let me remind him that, as a matter of fact, we would have dealt with far more of the estimates by now had the hon. gentleman been a little more co-operative and had the hon. gentlemen opposite been more co-operative.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Coming from my friend, that makes me smile.

Mr. Fulton: But it has been arranged that, although we have been held up and impeded in dealing with many of the estimates of government departments,—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The hon. gentleman himself is smiling now.

Mr. Fulton: We have arranged to bring before the committee of supply the estimates