

*Government Organization Act, 1970*

would be wrong for you to accept a program which called for spending by a department of environment and fisheries because the motion to establish that department has not been decided upon by this committee.

So, we start with the fundamental proposition that it would be wrong to attempt to change the name of the department in the manner suggested by the hon. member for St. John's East without having a decision of the committee and, later, a decision of the House. That is obvious. Therefore, I suggest it is equally wrong for any minister of the Crown by his will, or suggestion to present a change of name without anybody here having the opportunity to make a decision, first in the committee and then to approve it in the whole House. Of course, here, I am leaving out the aspect of the decisions made by people in the other House, and the final step, the signature by the representative of the Queen. So, I say in that respect alone, the point of order raised by the hon. member for St. John's East is a perfectly legitimate one.

• (4:00 p.m.)

We all have our names and we all have our identifications. Until those are changed by some lawful act, and not just a statement of intention to change them, we are imprisoned within the names that we have. Sir, may I quote to you from page 58 of our rules Standing Order 58(14) dealing with the business of supply and ways and means. It reads:

In every session the main estimates to cover the incoming fiscal year for every department of government shall be referred to standing committees on or before March 1 of the then expiring fiscal year. Each such committee shall consider and shall report, or shall be deemed to have reported, the same back to the House not later than May 31 in the then current fiscal year.

**Mr. Nielsen:** That is for every existing department.

**Mr. McCleave:** That is it. The hon. member for Yukon, with that great and instant depth of knowledge that he possesses in the law, points out exactly what I am trying to say. The reference is "for every department of government." Here, we are being asked to take some whim of the man who gave us fuddle-duddle, or of the minister of fisheries. I do not know who brought this about, but we have not okayed it yet. Furthermore, we may not do so for some considerable period of time. This is a sort of Throne Speech debate without limitation. The bill has at least seven different objectives, and so we may spend some time on it. We may even go some time beyond the date of May 31, which is mentioned in the Standing Order. I suggest it is fundamental that we deal with things according to the names which they have, rather than according to the names people suggest. The hon. member for St. John's East has a perfectly valid point of order.

**Mr. Davis:** Mr. Chairman, with respect to the point of order, I do not think there is a matter of any substance before the House. This House can place any name it wants on this department and the estimates, of course, would have to be reprinted to reflect that name. Several members opposite have raised a ghost that does not exist.

[Mr. McCleave.]

They intend to spend a lot of the time of the House debating whether they have the power to change the name of this department. Why not put it to a vote? They have already made one proposal and, as I say, the House has the power to put any name it wants on this new department.

**Mr. McGrath:** Would the minister permit a question? He has the statutory responsibility at the present time of presiding over the Department of Fisheries and Forestry. Would the minister tell me, as a member of this House charged with that responsibility by the people of my constituency, where in the blue book which was tabled today I can find the estimates for his Department of Fisheries and Forestry?

**Mr. Davis:** Under the heading "Environment."

**Mr. Nielsen:** Surely, the minister is not asking the members of this committee to swallow the proposition that the government can place any name it wishes on a departmental estimate?

**Mr. Jerome:** He said this House.

**Mr. Nielsen:** This House can do so, but the Standing Order which was read by my colleague a moment ago applies to the existing Department of Fisheries and Forestry, whose estimates do not appear in the estimates that were tabled. The department of the environment is not yet in existence. Each statute establishing a department starts with the words, "There shall be a department of—" and then follows the name of the department.

So far as this committee and the House are concerned, there is no such animal as a department of the environment. Therefore, how can the minister come out now and say that the government or the House of Commons can name this department anything they please, considering the Standing Order read by my colleague? The fact is that the department of the environment is not yet in existence. The law, by virtue of our Standing Orders, requires that the estimates of each existing department be tabled. The estimates of the existing Department of Fisheries and Forestry have not been tabled, and since the department of the environment is not yet in existence the law is not being complied with. It is that simple.

**Mr. Rose:** Mr. Chairman, I wish to ask a supplementary question concerning the referral of the estimates to a particular standing committee, something which is customary. Since the government has changed the title of this department in the estimates tabled today, does it also anticipate that the present Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry will be changed to the standing committee on the environment. At the moment that standing committee is composed of ten members, whereas the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry, which has been in existence long before I became a member of the House, is composed of 20 members?

**Mr. Davis:** The answer to that question is that it would be our intention to refer the estimates put forward in the blue book under the heading "Environment" to the