

Supply

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the hon. member for his good comments about me, but I regret he is turning this debate into something it is not. We are debating budgets and not free votes or recalls. I am sure the hon. member knows that.

Yes, I said that the plan of reducing the expense is in effect. It was announced in January. The board took a decision on the global plan. Some decisions were taken on individual items and some are already in effect. Some are entering, for example, the July 1 householder. The restaurant section has not been decided on.

I said at the beginning that we had to adopt a budget. We had a deadline to prepare a detailed budget of expenses that the government wanted to introduce and have passed by the House according to the rules. There is nothing wrong. Next year we would show a reduction in expenses instead of what the member is proposing.

• (1930)

If I am correct, he is proposing to reduce the budget expense by \$2.471 million. The difference between the member and I is that everything we accept is detailed. I do not know what he is counting in the \$2.471 million. He should tell the House which items they are because the motion is on the House budget. He should do a service and tell us about them.

I thank all my colleagues in the 35th Parliament. We started in good will and displayed good decorum. We have done very well so far. However I do not think this is a case for a free vote. In an administrative way we do not know the exact effect of the plan I announced on a yearly basis. For this fiscal year, and being the author of the plan, I do not know exactly how much it will reduce this budget.

The member says that we should reduce it by \$2.471 million. He should start by giving us the details. Did he check the figures with members of the administration? We enact policies but on a daily basis they keep the books.

From the beginning I have approached this issue on a non-partisan basis. If the member checks with his colleagues on the Board of Internal Economy who have been working with me on the matter, I am sure he will concur. The purpose here is not for each party to make political points. It is to make sure we save money for Canadian taxpayers.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, I will respond to the question. The member sits on the Board of Internal Economy and tells us that he has a plan.

An hon. member: It is a secretive board that nobody can get into.

Mr. Williams: "It is a secretive board that nobody can get into", according to my colleague. The Reform member who sits

on the board advised me that certain savings have been introduced, passed and are being implemented at this time. This year there will be a savings of that amount of money.

The point I made during my speech was that it was a confidence convention. I never mentioned a free vote. I am just saying that we should allow the House to recognize that savings have already been approved by the Board of Internal Economy in the amount of \$2.4 million. Why do we not collectively recognize that already exists and change the main estimates to reflect the new reality?

The President of the Treasury Board comes into the House any time he exceeds a budget and asks for more money. All I am saying is that now we recognize the Treasury Board is not going to be spending the money, let us make that recognition in the House. That is the point I am trying to make today.

I know the government whip concurs with our idea of saving money. They have gone along and made these changes. Let us recognize that and change the estimates now to reflect that.

What signal are we sending to other departments to save money if we say that we do not care if they save money, that they have been allocated money and we are not going to change it, that we are not going to take it back from them, that they can go ahead and spend it anyway? This is a great opportunity for them to reduce the estimates.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question of the member who tells us to reduce the budget by this amount.

• (1935)

Does he have a list to prove what he is saying now, that it is in fact the amount of savings realized by the government whip's plan? Or, is it not true that those figures are concocted and he has no idea what the savings are? If it is true that he has such savings in mind with a detailed list, I say to the hon. member that I am ready to give him unanimous consent to table the list now. If he does not have such a list, why does he not just withdraw the item from the Order Paper?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, I have a list in my office. I do not have it in front of me at the moment. I was advised by our member who sits on the Board of Internal Economy, although it is a secretive board and we do not know what really goes on there until the minutes are tabled long afterward, that these payments—

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. That is an unfair statement about the board because it has passed a policy wherein the minutes are tabled once they are approved. In the past few months we have been tabling minutes in the House every two weeks because the board meets every two weeks. Before the member makes such a statement he should check his facts.