

*Question of Privilege*

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I did not move a motion. What I did was simply to indicate that I thought this would be the feeling of the house, but the house is master of its own rules. If this were the consensus, then no formal requirement would be necessary.

**Mr. Douglas:** In that case it becomes an order of the house, and we would agree to that. I rise simply for the purpose of saying, as my colleague has said, that we are quite willing to meet this evening from eight o'clock to ten o'clock on the understanding that the question of the replenishment of the unemployment insurance fund will be dealt with during that period, or at least will be dealt with during the day and that it be called no later than eight o'clock.

I want to say that in making this suggestion my colleague is certainly not acting on behalf of the government or in collusion with the government.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Douglas:** Mr. Speaker, we have had this sort of insinuation on two or three occasions from members of the official opposition, and I want to say it is deeply resented. As a matter of fact the records of this session of parliament will show that we have voted against the government much more often than we have voted with them. As a matter of fact we only voted with the government on one amendment, and the official opposition also voted with the government against one of our amendments. We do not take orders either from the government or from the official opposition. We are here to facilitate and expedite the business of the house—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Douglas:**—and we will take an independent attitude in so doing. We support the suggestion of the Acting Prime Minister—

**Mr. Bell:** You would not sit at ten o'clock this morning.

**Mr. Douglas:**—but I want to say to the government that I hope the impasse into which the House of Commons has manoeuvred itself will be a lesson to the government not to bring in supplementary estimates and interim supply almost at the deadline, when parliament either has to rush through them without proper consideration or has to sit beyond the time when we intended to adjourn.

This has become an all too common practice. Supplementary estimates and regular estimates are left until the dying days or hours of the session and then are rushed through without proper consideration. It is true that some time has been spent on the agriculture estimates. I want to remind the government

[Mr. Douglas.]

there are a lot of estimates still to be dealt with, and this house need hardly be reminded that these are supplementary estimates, which means that the money has been spent. It is money which was not provided for in the regular estimates, which means that these expenditures were the result of an emergency or represent gross miscalculations by the departments in estimating their monetary needs for the fiscal year.

Members of the house have a right to expect from the government a very clear explanation why these additional sums are needed. They are not small sums. There is some \$240 million of expenditures and almost \$57 million in loans, investments and advances, a total of almost \$300 million. In spite of the hour and the time I do not think we should be asked simply to slide these items through because the government was derelict in not presenting them to the house at an early enough date so they could be given proper examination and consideration.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we are quite prepared, subject to the conditions which I have already stated, to sit this evening, but we think the house should take whatever time is necessary to examine these estimates and pass them properly even though we have now gone into what was to have been the Easter recess.

**Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley):** Mr. Speaker, we in this group are quite prepared to co-operate by sitting this evening. We would love to get down to business and deal with the matters at hand. I had to return to the house, and I might say I found that parliament and parliamentary procedure have reached a new low in the thinking of the people across the country because of what has taken place in the last few days. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it would be a good thing if we could agree to get ahead with the business and leave all the wrangling for another occasion.

**Mr. Raymond Langlois (Megantic):** Mr. Speaker, I go along with some of the members on this side of the house in that sometimes we have to put a great deal of water in our wine to digest the food that the government on the other side of the house feeds us. There is one thing I do not quite understand, and that is why this problem could not have been discussed a little earlier in the day, following the usual procedure so that members of all parties could have been made aware of the situation and could have come to a decision on it.

So far as we in this corner of the house are concerned, we are quite willing to sit the extra hours tonight, but we only hope the government does not make a habit of this