

consumed and wasted the time of the house. I will demonstrate that you have used obstruction to prevent the business of the house being conducted as it should have been conducted. On the order paper right now, if people would look at it, are 30 items which have already been introduced and are waiting there for debate. The bills accompanying them are already in this cover. They have been printed and distributed, with the exception of those which are introduced by way of resolution; that is to say, the money bills that are preceded by a resolution. The suggestion has been made, with regard to the estimates, that we should be further ahead with them. Well, let me point out this. Each year the estimates for the ensuing fiscal year are tabled, supply motions are moved and passed, the estimates are called forward and the house deals with them as the opportunity arises. Last spring the opposition spent 27 days, which is a record in the history in parliament in Canada, dealing with supplementary estimates for the preceding fiscal year.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Churchill: They refused to let us get on with the main estimates for the year 1962-63.

Mr. Pickersgill: They were all new programs.

An hon. Member: Irresponsibility.

Mr. Churchill: Complete irresponsibility. In the session which started in September, up to the present time we have had available for discussion in the committee six departments; we have had three of those departments up for consideration—agriculture, external affairs and labour—and not one single estimate of any one of those three departments has been passed by this house.

Mr. Ricard: Not one single item.

Mr. Churchill: No, not one single item. The other day at five o'clock after discussing labour estimates for two full days I asked the committee please to continue and pass item number one.

Mr. Pearson: On unemployment.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The most important question facing Canada.

Mr. Churchill: I was refused. That is the way the estimates have been handled by the opposition: six departments waiting for consideration for over two months and not one single item passed. Just before Christmas, when I wanted to bring the main estimates in front of the house during the last six days before the Christmas vacation, the opposition

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saw fit to spend those six days discussing interim supply, when they should have been on the main estimates.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Pickersgill: Would the hon. gentleman permit me to ask him a question? Would the hon. gentleman tell us how many estimates were called between July 25 and September 27 when this parliament should have been meeting?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Churchill: The hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate (Mr. Pickersgill) on occasion makes an effective contribution to debate. Tonight he is certainly not at his best.

Mr. Speaker: It has been customary during recent years to have six supply motions. On the first supply motion, six departments are called, on the next five supply motions three departments are called, and so on. Prior to just a few years ago there was no limitation on the number of supply motions; but the rule has been altered and that is the way it stands at the moment. The house is master of its own rules and those rules can be temporarily altered in order to expedite the business of the house. The house can move very quickly if it wants to. Just prior to the Christmas recess I suggested to the house that if it would give unanimous consent we might deal with five small bills which were in front of us.

Mr. Pickersgill: That was suggested by the opposition.

Mr. Churchill: At my prompting.

Mr. Pearson: Look at the record.

Mr. Churchill: The house dealt with these five bills in about an hour and a half's time. The house can move very quickly if it desires. If it does not desire it will drag its feet and obstruct.

An hon. Member: Like the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson).

Mr. Olson: Would the hon. gentleman permit a question?

Mr. Churchill: Surely.

Mr. Olson: Might I ask him why he did not come to the meeting they asked for to organize the business of the house prior to Christmas, when all the leaders of the opposition parties agreed to come, and it was not called for over a week?

Mr. Churchill: I am glad you reminded me of the meeting which was held among the leaders before Christmas, because the Leader of the Opposition asked today, why did we not reassemble the house earlier in January?

Mr. Pickersgill: Why didn't you?