

*Business of Supply***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**SUPPLY**

## ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58—AGRICULTURE

House in committee of the whole for consideration and disposal of an item of the estimates for the year ending March 31, 1977—Mr. Laniel in the chair.

[English]

Resolved, that a sum not exceeding \$35,451,000 be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1977 (less the amount voted in interim supply) as follows:

Vote 1—Administration—Program expenditures and contributions, \$35,451,000.

**The Chairman:** Order, please. Before calling upon hon. members perhaps I should at this time bring to the attention of the committee the problem we have had on previous occasions. Members will be aware that we have experienced some difficulty on similar occasions when the committee of the whole has been examining the estimates during consideration of supply, specifically as to the length of speeches and the time allocation for the asking of questions.

After analysing past practices and taking into account the changes in the rules, I have concluded that in the past, when considering supply, time was not limited and members could not really complain about the allotment of time on an individual basis, but that this practice should not apply to a one-day consideration of supply, as is the case today. In view of this, I feel that perhaps this is a good time to consider the matter in the hope of preventing any difficulty arising during the consideration of the estimates today. I feel that the committee should either come to some kind of unanimous agreement on the agreed procedure in respect of time allocation, or accept the proposal the Chair is prepared to put forward. The suggestion is that speeches be limited to 20 minutes and that we alternate from the opposition side to the government side. When a member directs questions to the minister, the time required for the answer should be included in the allotted time unless it appears to the Chair that the answer is unduly lengthy.

In addition, I would suggest that a second intervention should not be accepted before the first round of speeches or questions, and that hon. members be recognized when they seek the floor by standing in the House or by giving some other indication of a desire to participate in the debate, perhaps in the form of some notice to the Chair. I am ready to receive an indication of the feelings or the points of view of hon. members in respect of this matter.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Chairman, I think the procedure you outlined is perhaps as good as any, using the 20-minute limit which would include questions and answers, if I interpreted you correctly, as I hope I have, with members being recognized on a rotation basis around the chamber. I think we should try that procedure. I hope it will work and that it will not lead to a breakdown such as has occurred in recent memory and experience. Speaking for the official opposition, I think, in any event, your suggestion is worth a try.

[Mr. Cossitt.]

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Chairman, perhaps you have indicated what your intentions are in relation to the question I wish to ask, but I did not hear as I was not listening. What I am concerned about is whether there is to be a regular apportionment of time as between members of the government side and the opposition side. I should like to know what sort of division Your Honour would be ready to make in that regard, so there is some understanding at this time.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Chairman, the point raised by the hon. member is a valid one. I would not suggest that because this is an opposition day, the opposition should be allowed to ask all the questions. I would not suggest that, sir, but I would think it not unfair if you apply your mind in your usual judicial manner to ensure that the fact that what is an opposition day under our rules is not defeated in the allocation of time. It is not possible for you to allocate time in a mathematical way, but I am sure you will bear in mind that this is an opposition motion. If some difficulty develops, I am sure there will be a protest; but I hope that will not be the case.

**Mr. Peters:** Mr. Chairman, I think this is a matter that at some time in the future should be referred back to the committee on procedure and organization. In the past we have run into considerable difficulty that I do not think was anticipated. It has been suggested many times in the past that when an opposition day is used to discuss the estimates, the proceedings should be considered more in terms of an opposition day than in terms of the normal consideration of the estimates.

It is my understanding, from the way the motion is set out, that there is to be a vote on the item at the end of our consideration. The item of the estimates was not originally spelled out, but I presume the vote will be on Item No. 1. This raises an additional problem. These estimates are still before the committee on Agriculture. They have not been withdrawn from that committee and I think it is, therefore, inappropriate to call for a vote on an item which really is not back in the House.

The procedure we should follow is the procedure we follow on an opposition day, with the 20-minute rule being applied. This is not the practice during the usual consideration of estimates in the House. In that case when we are considering an item hon. members' remarks must be directed to that one item, whether it is administration or something else, and all the questioning must be in respect of that item until consideration has been completed, and then we move on to another item. If we were to bring this item back to the House, then we would not be following that procedure. These estimates, as such, may be the basis for discussion on an opposition day, but the estimates themselves are not back in the House. I disagree that we are in a position to handle them in the way indicated in our Standing Orders by the motion before us today. I think Your Honour would have to come to the conclusion that we must handle them as a subject for an opposition day, and that in effect the estimates are before us only in that sense and are not here in the sense that a vote can be taken under this section, because they are still in the committee. I think that is the way it should be.