

Mr. WALSH: I was interested this afternoon when the hon. member for Témiscouata (Mr. Pouliot) asserted his prerogative of dictating the rules of order of this house. I suggest that any hon. member who seeks to wrest that crown from his head should be severely dealt with. Speaking on the second reading of this bill I emphasized this particular point, and I want again to place myself on record. It is all very well for the Minister of Marine (Mr. Howe) to contemplate the pleasant picture I know he has in mind. I believe he is quite sincere when he says that the appointments to be made will be made in a businesslike manner, the same as they would be made in a private enterprise. If that were possible there could be absolutely no criticism of this clause, but it is not possible under present conditions. I think we need only consider the straining at the leash on the part of certain hon. members opposite who seem to be anxious for this clause to go through to realize that they are anticipating something in the way of political profit. With bated breath and whetted appetite they feel that they are approaching a political millennium as far as patronage is concerned. It is that very attitude which makes me feel that the minister should give more mature consideration to this particular clause at this particular time. Although I recognize that he is sincere in his desire to remove all positions from political patronage, the fact remains that he has not made his position secure. During the course of his remarks the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) suggested that this measure was being introduced because of the incompetence of the various harbour boards. I do not think he meant to use those terms and I know the minister did not introduce this measure for that particular reason. We have had harbour boards in the past which were eminently competent.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Would the hon. gentleman permit me to interrupt? I had in mind the statement made by the minister himself, who said:

To me it shows the most shocking betrayal of public trust I have ever read in my life. I feel in one way that it should be put on Hansard so that the people of this country might learn something about harbour commissions; on the other hand I dislike to do this because it would certainly give the people a very unfortunate idea of how public affairs are conducted.

I based my statement upon those words.

Mr. WALSH: Apparently the hon. member has forgotten that the Minister of Marine

seemed to have certain mental reservations because he qualified the statement which the hon. member has just quoted.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I listened to his remarks and I did not hear any qualification whatever.

Mr. WALSH: I am assuming it was qualified for I hardly expect that the Minister of Marine would allow a statement of such severe criticism of previous harbour boards to stand in that particular manner. I just want to emphasize again my opposition to this clause although I am in general agreement with the principle of the bill. Along with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and others who have expressed their opinions, I hope that some way will be found whereby political patronage can be absolutely eliminated from the management of our national harbours. If that can be done much money can be saved and greater efficiency established.

Progress reported.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1936-37

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates for the financial year ending March 31, 1937, was presented by Hon. Charles A. Dunning (Minister of Finance) and read by Mr. Speaker to the house.

Mr. DUNNING: In moving that the estimates be referred to the committee of supply, perhaps I might be permitted a brief word in summarized explanation. The special supplementary estimates are designed to deal with those expenditures which the government deems necessary because of conditions now prevailing, as distinct from the main estimates which were designed to cover what might be described as the normal expenditures of the country. These estimates contain provision for projects already undertaken to the extent of \$30,418,000; they contain provision for other projects to the extent of \$28,430,000, or a total of \$58,848,000 for projects already undertaken, and other projects. I may say that the division is maintained all through the details of the estimates as between these two classes of items. In addition, there is provision for \$26,000,000 for grants in aid to the provinces with respect to direct relief, and provision for an estimated deficit of the Canadian National Railways of \$39,900,000, a total in all of \$124,748,000.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: Is there no provision there for relief as such, except what is given through the provinces?