

I would also like to say that it is certainly within the jurisdiction of the Senate and of honourable senators to question the process and to bring it to the attention of the minister and of the department, if this has not been done, perhaps, in the most appropriate manner. I will certainly—

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, is Senator Doody closing the debate on the motion for the second reading of the bill?

Senator Doody: I am trying to answer Senator Stewart's question.

Senator Frith: I just wanted to be sure. That's fine.

Senator Doody: Whatever the reason, whatever the rationale behind this particular sense of urgency, I shall try to find that out. And make no mistake about it, the urgency was conveyed to me. I am not putting a scam across the chamber. The message was received, and I have delivered it. And I think it would be fitting for us to try to honour the urgency, or at least the request.

Senator Stewart: I thank Senator Doody for that response.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, perhaps the appropriate thing to do would be to move the adjournment of the debate on the motion for the second reading of the bill until tomorrow. It can be adjourned in either Senator Stewart's name or in my name. Once we have the answer to the question, we can then deal with the motion for second reading tomorrow; and if everything proceeds satisfactorily, we could give leave to have third reading on the spot tomorrow.

Senator Doody: Certainly that process is in order. I see nothing wrong with that. However, it does raise the question once again—and to me it is a philosophical question rather than a political question—as to whether we in the Senate really want to hang up an appropriation bill once it is sent to us with the appropriate explanations.

Having examined both the main estimates and the supplementary estimates in committee and having reported on both to the chamber, do we really want to refuse to proceed to second reading of the bill before we get the answer? Do we want to adjourn the debate on the motion for the second reading of the bill until the answer comes and then, if the answer is satisfactory, at that point give the other place the appropriation bill that they have asked for?

I think that that is worthy of consideration before we decide on our course of action. It is certainly within the prerogative of the Senate to do whatever it wishes with any bill that comes before us. I just want to flag that question. I do not want it said that the flag had not been raised at the appropriate time, because if the bells start to ring and the flags start to wave again, I want to be in the van of the parade this time and not hanging on to the end of it.

Senator Frith: The problem with that, of course, is that whether or not we are holding something up turns on the answer to the question. Senator Stewart has said that he does not wish to hold this bill up. However, if the answer to the question is that there is really no need to have it until the end

of June, which would be the normal time frame, then of course we would not be holding it up by holding it until the end of June. If, on the other hand, the answer provides us with good reasons for passing the bill now, then we pass the bill now.

So, in neither case are we talking about holding up supply.

Senator Doody: I think we are, in effect. I think—and I may be wrong; I may be interpreting Senator Frith's statement incorrectly—what the senator is suggesting is that if the answer that I bring in tomorrow, assuming that I can get the answer by tomorrow—and I hope that I can; or Friday, or whatever—isn't satisfactory to honourable senators opposite, then they will deny this appropriation bill to the Commons. That is where I see the danger. My attitude—and it was the same when I was sitting on the opposite side of this place, so I have no hesitation in saying so—is that when the Commons votes supply, the Senate provides it.

Senator Frith: Absolutely.

Senator Doody: And that notwithstanding the fact that we may not agree with their reasoning, or that we may disagree very much with the amounts and with the subheads. And I think if we find cause for that, we should so inform the minister and tell him that he should straighten up his act, or he should get his department together and change his system. But the idea of the Senate standing here and suggesting that we should wait until we get an appropriate answer about an appropriation bill, sent to us from the House of Commons, to me is just fraught with danger. I would caution honourable senators to proceed that way with extreme care. I would much prefer to have second reading take place this afternoon and proceed to try to answer this question before the bill receives third reading tomorrow.

Senator Frith: The only difficulty that we now have is a misunderstanding as to what is happening right now. What is happening right now is not holding up supply. The only "satisfactory" answer, or unsatisfactory answer, will be either: We have a very good reason for needing this bill today—

Senator Doody: I have told you that already.

Senator Frith: Yes, but then the question was asked: Why? And to give details as to why the normal period did not apply—namely, that interim supply usually lasts until the end of June.

If the answer tomorrow is that we are right, that it is not really needed until the end of June, then there will be no holding-up involved. If they say, "No, we need it now, and this is the reason we need it now—", with the detail that Senator Doody has undertaken to give, then it will be passed and there will be no holding-up.

I want to make it clear that this is not a discussion of holding up supply. It is a question of getting an explanation as to why we would be holding it up if it were not granted this week.

If Senator Doody finds it more satisfactory to work on the basis of our proceeding with second reading now with the explanation to be given tomorrow on the motion for the third