

On November 22 of last year, the Acting Speaker ruled that the rights of the minority required protection, and that because the NDP had not been given an Opposition Day in that supply period, he would select their motion for debate. However, today we face an entirely different set of circumstances. As I have pointed out, the NDP won their argument the last time around. The occupant of the Chair agreed to disregard our understanding of the appropriate means of calculating the annual distribution of Opposition Days. Moreover—and this appears to be the critical point in the decision rendered that day—the Acting Speaker was of the opinion that because the NDP had not been given the opportunity to debate a motion of their choosing during a Supply period, he would give them that opportunity.

That is not the case today. The NDP have already received two Opposition Days in the current period. Based on their own calculations, this would exhaust their entitlement for the year if it were given on this day. We would then face the problem of having to decide whether or not the NDP would be entitled to an additional day in order to provide them with some opportunity to hold a debate of their choice in the fall semester. If that request were to be granted by the Speaker, not only would the NDP have been permitted to pre-empt Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition today, but the NDP would be permitted to appropriate an Opposition Day which would legitimately belong to our members.

The NDP may stand in the House and argue that there is some rule of thumb which would lead to their being given three Opposition Days in the spring semester. Presumably this argument is based on the proposition that the Parties are entitled to a proportional distribution of Opposition Days in each Supply period. The flaw in that argument is that based upon the ratio that I have referred to and that we have employed, the NDP would be entitled to precisely 3.25 days in the first semester, 1.25 days in the second semester and 1.75 days in the third semester. It is quite simply impossible to distribute days in that way.

For that reason, the allocation of Opposition Days in any given semester has varied over the life of this Parliament. Thus the average allocation in the first semester has been 2.75 days rather than the 3.25 days dictated by simple mathematics. In the second semester the average has been two days rather than the 1.25 days obtained through the proportional model. In the third semester the New Democratic Party has averaged 2.25 days rather than the 1.75 days which result from proportional distribution. Thus it can be demonstrated that the NDP have always been under-allocated days in the first semester; over-allocated days—50 per cent of the time, at least—in the second semester, and always over-allocated days in the final semester.

● (1120)

With regard to the distribution of voting days, Mr. Speaker, I can only ask how a distribution of three votes over a two-year period can be evenly spread across three semesters of Supply which occur in any given year. Furthermore, if the New

Supply

Democratic Party chooses to argue that it has not received its entitlement of voting days for this year, I suggest it refer to the *Votes and Proceedings* for February 14, where it will find that the House divided on a motion by the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis).

If you were to look back over the past four calendar years, Mr. Speaker, you would find an interesting pattern. In 1980 the New Democratic Party had one motion which terminated in a vote. The next year it had two motions. In 1982 it had one motion and in 1983 it had two motions. By extension one can see that 1984 is a year in which the NDP is entitled to only one motion pursuant to Standing Order 62(9), and it already has had one such motion put before the House in this calendar year.

Hon. Members of the New Democratic Party are certainly adept at complaining that no one takes them seriously and that their rights are continually being denied them. The reason for that is that so often their complaints are not founded in reality. What it comes down to today, Mr. Speaker, is that the New Democratic Party is afraid that the Government may decide to call an election prior to the end of the year and that it will, ostensibly, lose out on some fraction of the Opposition Days to which it would normally be entitled this year.

Our Party has not been restricting Hon. Members of the New Democratic Party from the opportunity to be heard in this place. In fact, the New Democratic Party has taken almost 30 per cent of the Opposition Days which have been held to date this year. The New Democratic Party does not want to debate the issue of the Government's mismanagement of Revenue Canada; that is clear. It does not want to allow our Members of Parliament to have a fair share of the Opposition Days. It does not even want to be consistent in its calculation of the way in which days should be allocated. Instead, Mr. Speaker, members of the New Democratic Party are going to stand here and anticipate the future life of this House, this parliamentary session, by attempting to get their Opposition Days in before some projected election call, and they are not even prepared to wait and see whether the final Opposition Day in the current period would be allocated to them. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, there is another Opposition Day which will be held at some time before the end of next month.

The New Democratic Party is also engaging in a more direct form of anticipation, Mr. Speaker. The motion which it proposes to move today condemns the Government for failing to introduce amendments to the Canada Labour Code. Quite apart from the fact that the motion contains the false accusation that the Conservative Party stands in the way of labour reforms, it also neglects to mention the fact that a Bill with respect to that legislation has been introduced before the House, that is, Bill C-34, which does purport to amend the provisions of the Canada Labour Code. The NDP by its motion proposes to anticipate the debate which will take place on this legislation in the coming days. The motion of the Hon. Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe does not offend the rule of anticipation.