

Speaker's Ruling

to adopt the attitude that I could judge political situations such as this and substitute my judgment for that of certain hon. members, either a majority or, perhaps, sometimes a minority. I do not believe that this is the role of a Speaker under our system. I am not prepared at this time to take this responsibility on my shoulders. I think it is my duty to rule on such matters in accordance with the rules, regulations and standing orders which hon. members themselves have turned over to the Speaker to administer.

That is the end of Speaker Lamoureux' quote.

[Translation]

In the light of our long-standing practice and the wisdom of Speaker Lamoureux, I have chosen not to substitute my judgment for that expressed by a majority on the Finance Committee, unless that majority decides to report its dilemma to the House.

[English]

The Chair has been unable to find the basis upon which to act at this time. That is not to say that under different circumstances the Speaker would not intervene. If I am cautious in not acting now it is simply because the Chair does not supervise the standing committee chairmen. That function belongs to the members of each committee and they have obvious avenues to pursue other than invoking privilege in the House.

At the same time, chairmen ought to be mindful of their responsibilities and make their decisions and rulings within the bounds of the fine balance provided by our rules.

I am grateful for the patience of the House and grateful to members for their submissions.

I would urge all chairmen and members of committees to try and strive mightily to ensure that the general rules of this place are followed as far as is sensible and helpful in those committees. I remind hon. members that endless points of privilege on what goes on in committee, when they fall short of that extreme situation where a Speaker might have to intervene, take up a great deal of time in this House. I would ask all hon. members to consider carefully what I have said in this ruling and also, perhaps, some of the things I have not said.

POINT OF ORDER**ALLOTTED DAYS—SPEAKER'S RULING**

Mr. Speaker: Last Thursday, March 22, the House heard extensive arguments brought forward by various members relating to the complex and sometimes perplexing subject of supply, specifically the allotment of days for opposition motions, the notice required for these motions and the calculation of the number of these motions that can be votable.

Other questions raised touched not so much on our rules but rather on our general practice regarding the embargo of any motion by the member who submits it to the Table or to the Journals branch, whether that member is from the government or the opposition side.

[Translation]

I wish to thank all members who made contributions to the debate on these points. Such discussions help us to clarify the meaning of our rules which can sometimes appear somewhat ambiguous.

Shortly after I heard members' arguments, I stated to the House my decision that last Friday and today would be opposition days and that the opposition had fulfilled the requirements of the Standing Orders in designating a vote on Friday's motion to be non-deferrable. At the same time, I indicated my intention to return with a more detailed ruling. I am now prepared to offer members my assessment of the contending points raised last Thursday.

[English]

In his presentation, the government whip maintained that two elements were required in order to have a non-deferrable votable opposition supply motion on a Friday. The obvious element was that the opposition had to give 48 hours' notice of its intention to demand such a vote.

Equally necessary he contended was the designation of an allotted day on a Friday by the government before the opposition can give notice that a vote on a supply motion be non-deferrable.

With respect to the first element I certainly agree. The rules clearly spell out this requirement. Standing Order 81(12)(b) states: