

● (1232)

The legislative items rejected by you were generally amendments to statutes and were not in any way related to the granting of authority for expenditure. The item under consideration has as its purpose the granting of authority for the expenditure for the support of the coal mining and related industries in Cape Breton and for grants in lieu of taxes to municipalities in that area; that is to say, to give assistance to an economically distressed part of the country. The municipalities which I think would be affected are in the constituency of Cape Breton-The Sydneys and Cape Breton-East Richmond, and would include Glace Bay, New Waterford, Sydney, Sydney Mines and the county of Cape Breton. They would lose in the amount of close to \$1 million, that is, \$978,616.23.

The amendment to the act is limited strictly to the purposes of the proposed expenditures and it is not a general amendment to the act, as well stated by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. It is merely incidental to the purpose of the item. The intent in your ruling was to proscribe the legislation from estimates that properly belong in ordinary bills. It was not your intent to eliminate from the scope of the business of supply a large number of items the purposes of which are restricted to expenditure. Scores of items every year must contain similar phrases that have a strictly limited amending effect to statutes other than appropriation acts. For instance, items that would grant funds for agricultural support programs incidentally amend the Senate and House of Commons Act so that MPs and senators who are farmers are not putting their seats in danger by accepting funds available to all farmers. I think this example illustrates well the point I want to make.

To extend the prohibition against items the purpose of which is to make general amendments to statutes other than appropriation acts, to incidental and strictly limited phrases in items that are for the purpose of granting authority for expenditure would be, in my view, a misapplication of an important parliamentary principle.

As far as the second item is concerned, Transport vote L56a, I should like to ask that the remarks I have made be extended to that item, and I just add that this item is merely incidental, and of a financial or expenditure nature dealing with a Crown-owned company. What I have said in respect of the first item discussed here today I would suggest should apply to the second item, and I would merely add that we are dealing with a Crown-owned company and it is merely incidental, and of a financial expenditure nature.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am grateful to hon. members who participated in the argument today. The argument and the references will be of great help. We did go through a rather thorough review of this about a year ago. I will, of course, draw rather heavily on the rules I attempted to set down to the House at that time in attempting to determine whether the two items that have been put in question today offend those guidelines I set forth to the House; that is to say, whether they seek, through the supply process, separate legis-

lative authority from that which already exists, or whether they are simply another application of funds under a program for which legislative authority is already in existence.

That is basically the test I had in mind, and I will take some time to examine it. That was the purpose of inviting these arguments for the first time in advance of the final supply day, to take away from it the eleventh-hour atmosphere with which we have been faced before. I certainly hope it is as big an improvement to our procedures in the minds of hon. members as it seems to be to me, because it is a great help to me to have a little time to reflect on this question before prejudicing or jeopardizing, as it were, the very vital process of supply which has to take place on the last day of this part of the session. Therefore, I will examine the matter and try to rule on it as expeditiously as possible.

Housing

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58(11)—ALLEGED GOVERNMENT FAILURE TO DEAL WITH HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY PROBLEMS

Mrs. Jean E. Pigott (Ottawa-Carleton) moved:

That this House condemns the Liberal government and, in particular, the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, whose policies have failed to meet the critical needs of housing, urban transportation and energy conservation.

Mr. Speaker: Members will be remembered that proceedings on this motion will expire in accordance with Standing Order 58(11).

Mrs. Pigott: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry we kept the minister from Quebec City today, but it is delightful to have him with us. I am very grateful I can speak on this motion, because I am concerned about urban living and also about the particular aspect of housing. I think the great Irish poet, William Butler Yeats said, "In dreams begins responsibility"—and housing is an important part of every Canadian's dream. The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs bears a responsibility for helping to achieve this dream.

Housing has become a major socioeconomic issue of the 1970s. Housing is now everybody's business. That simple fact could be easily illustrated by reciting virtually lists of programs and agencies which affect housing. It is clear, Mr. Speaker, from the extent of federal, provincial and municipal involvement in housing that all three levels of government must work together in this field. It is equally important that co-operation exist between the various governmental levels and the private house building, development and financial sectors. Their resources, know-how and diversity are necessary to make the housing wheels turn. Most important in the housing equation is the co-operation and support of Canadians at large