

Supply

In my view Hon. Members have clearly expressed what to them is a grievance. As I stated at the beginning, that grievance is that the House will pass tonight in all stages a Bill confirming the special warrants, and they have not been debated nor has there been an opportunity for the House to examine and debate them and go through the usual procedure.

The point Hon. Members are making is that this would seem, on the face of it at least, to be a breach of parliamentary tradition. We heard some very incisive arguments put a few days ago on the necessity for Parliament to be in command of the spending and that Hon. Members have the obligation, which is part of the ancient history of this place, to examine the spending requirements of a Government and either to reject them or pass them.

• (1600)

Having said that, the probability is, as Hon. Members have pointed out, that there will not be any examination or debate on these particular warrants. The House, of course, that is, all the Members of this place, at least in theory could defeat the Bill tonight. I say nothing further.

In any event, the position comes down to this: nothing has been done which breaches the rules of this place. That does not mean that the grievance the Hon. Members have may not breach some tradition or some convention of this place. But upon that I am helpless to react or to change.

It seems to me the solution is to either amend the Financial Administration Act or to amend the Standing Orders. The Hon. Members have raised the point in the Chamber a few minutes ago, suggesting that perhaps the Government would refer the whole matter to the appropriate standing committee. Again, as I indicated, I am powerless to order that. That is a matter for consultation between both sides of the House.

In any event, I come back to the point raised by the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Mr. Milliken) and the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria). The point they make is clear. The probability is there will be no chance to examine and debate the warrants. Unfortunately, for those Members

who are complaining about this, the Speaker is not in a position where the matter can be remedied. But the point the Hon. Members have made is there for all to see.

I thank Hon. Members for their interventions.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—THE ENVIRONMENT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Broadbent:

That this House condemn the government for failing to ensure fairness and equality to all Canadians, and for failing to make protection of the environment a priority.

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech by the New Democratic social affairs critic and I see once again that what distinguishes the New Democrats is that they never had to administer a budget, Mr. Speaker. I think that is why they have no credibility, because we hear them promoting programs that are indeed necessary, but which cannot be financed.

I would also say, Mr. Speaker, that they are inconsistent because before, they advocated taxing the rich to ease the burden of the poor. That is what we did with the latest Budget, but they continue to pretend the opposite. I would have two questions for the Hon. Member.

The first is that the New Democrat was against the national child care strategy when it was presented to Parliament. Her colleague, the former critic, said, for example, Mr. Speaker, that the Canada Assistance Plan was more generous. She claimed that it was. She therefore said that the national child care strategy should be rejected and the status quo maintained. Today, if I go by what I just heard the New Democratic critic say, they would now agree with the national child care strategy brought in by the Conservative Government. I would like her to explain to me why the New Democrats have changed their mind.