

*Points of Order*

For those reasons we are looking for the co-operation of the Government. We are looking for the assistance of the Chair in the matter that has been brought to Your Honour's attention by my colleague from Kingston and the Islands.

**Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to my colleague's attention two facts. I am sure that the record is clear.

In terms of the warrants, as was stated, there were warrants issued on January 19, 1989; February 16, 1989; and March 23, 1989. At those times we met the criteria set out under the Financial Administration Act to require that these warrants be issued. The criteria we were following were the following. The first was that Parliament was not in session. Parliament was not in session.

The second was that there was an urgent requirement. As President of the Treasury Board I assured myself that there was an urgent requirement. The third was that no appropriations were available. We verified that no appropriations were available.

**Mr. Boudria:** Of course they were available.

**Mr. de Cotret:** Given the fact that Parliament was not in session, when Parliament came back we had a very extensive—

**Mr. Boudria:** You only prorogued it at the beginning of March.

**Mr. de Cotret:** Could I finish, Mr. Speaker?

When Parliament came back we had extensive disclosure. For the first time in the use of Governor General's warrants we gave as much information as we would usually do for Supplementary Estimates.

The next point I want to make is that on April 1 we asked for a warrant to the amount of \$6.175 million for 45 days.

**Mr. Boudria:** We are not talking about that one.

**Mr. de Cotret:** I would like to tell my colleague opposite that that is included in the Estimates. It is included in the Bill that will be debated today. That Bill and all items contained in it will be referred to committee and subject to Parliament's final approval. The procedure has been forthright and up front. I do not see that there is any difficulty. In terms of the interim supply Bill, the warrant is fully included in the totals within that Bill.

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, with respect, the Minister has missed my point. I am not arguing about the April 1 warrant. I agree that we will have ample time to consider that as supply days go on and the Estimates have been referred to the committees. I am referring to the warrants for the financial year ending March 31, 1989. Those warrants are being approved in this interim supply Bill. Clause 3 of the Bill confirms those warrants. They will be gone. All the material contained in the book that the Minister tabled in the House, that is, the statement on special Governor General's warrants, will now be passed and approved by the House as a result of the passage of this Bill which will go through this afternoon according to the order made April 4.

Thus we will not have an opportunity to review what would have been Supplementary Estimates. Had this unusual and highly irregular procedure not taken place, we would have seen them referred to the standing committees of the House where they would be reviewed. That is my point. I am asking the Minister to deal with it and allow those matters to be referred to the committee notwithstanding the passage of this Bill.

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I appreciate that this is an opposition day. We want to be debating the motion which the New Democratic Party has put forward. I do not want to infringe upon that courtesy at all.

My hon. friend referred to what a previous President of the Treasury Board did. I do not believe he specifically referred to Supplementary Estimates flowing from those warrants. The question is, and this question was argued previously, whether or not there was a breach of privilege in the use of the special warrants. I believe that in the ruling Your Honour made you were quite clear that there was no question of privilege. If my hon. friends opposite want to challenge that ruling, then they should do it in another forum.