

members are aware of the fact that I would be happier if the whole increase were cancelled, as it ought to be, but of course that is up to the government. In any case, I trust that the issue of increases for members of parliament having to be kept within the law will be dealt with by Your Honour.

I would remind Your Honour, of course, that last year you felt that consideration had to be given not only to the actual dollar increases but to certain other benefits as well, to make sure that the figure that was arrived at was within last year's guidelines. Surely the same would apply for 1978, and that is why I present this as a point of order for Your Honour's consideration.

**Mr. Speaker:** The point is well taken. The hon. member has recited accurately the events of last year. Fortunately, the matter has been raised in sufficient time to give us an opportunity to examine whether there is, first, a consensus to proceed in the same way and, second, if there is such a consensus, to consider the best mechanics of doing it. I undertake, as a result of the point of order raised by the hon. member, to consult with his counterparts in the other parties in the House to see whether there is a desire to proceed in the same way as last year, and to have those consultations as expeditiously as possible.

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**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I see the Solicitor General has just come into the House, and I understand, after consulting the deputy whip of the opposition, that he is going to make a speech in the course of the debate on the Speech from the Throne. I wonder if he would be prepared to tell us whether there is anything in his speech in the way of an announcement with respect to the activities of the RCMP that were not heretofore known, and which ought to be made by way of a statement on motions so we can question him with respect to such an announcement.

If he could tell us that, I would withdraw my point of order; but I think it is extremely important that the House should know that, because of the importance of preserving the efficacy of our rules with respect to announcements that should be made by way of statements on motions.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The putting of such a question at this time is rather extraordinary. There is nothing that can be done to prevent a minister participating in the throne speech debate and saying what he wants to say. However, if the minister wishes to give that indication, I take it it is the sense of the House to receive it. But there is nothing obligatory about it in respect of the minister's actions. He is not required to do so, nor is it within the practices of the House for him to do so.

**An hon. Member:** Are you afraid to be questioned?

*The Address—Mr. Whittaker*  
**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**NATIONAL ANTHEM ACT**

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL ANTHEM

**Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-9, entitled "An Act respecting the national anthem of Canada".

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

**SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

[English]

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed, from Thursday, October 27, consideration of the motion of Mr. Dawson for an address to Her Majesty the Queen in reply to the speech at the opening of the session.

**Mr. G. H. Whittaker (Okanagan Boundary):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to take part in the last day of the debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. It was a pleasure for me to hear Her Majesty the Queen, that gracious lady, read the Speech from the Throne, and, it was certainly a pleasure to meet her afterwards. However, the Speech from the Throne, which was written in the Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) office, was very dull and did not contain much for the people of Canada. It is probably more famous for what it did not say than for what it said. Many areas of concern, such as our economy, were not mentioned in that speech, nor was much said about such issues as the environment, transportation, and agriculture.

The environment is an area of concern in Canada to which we must pay more attention. Canada is on the northern fringes of the world, and its environment is very delicate. There is the danger of pollution in our lakes and rivers. Some of that pollution can never be stopped or reversed. We must learn from the experience of other countries and we must treat our environment with more respect than we have. Over the past few years the Prime Minister has not seen to it that there has been continuity in the Department of the Environment. In the five years I have been here, there have been many ministers in charge of that department. It is important that the department becomes better orientated to what is going on, and that it uses more force than it has been using. Instead of playing musical chairs, the department should become a priority department in Canada.

● (1222)

The question of energy is now very closely related to the environment. As our fossil fuels become depleted, we are