

The parliamentary secretary has pointed out that there was plenty of warning given with copies, et cetera. That is not the point. The point is, and the statute is clear, that the minister shall table this before the House within the 15-day period as set out. In this particular case, even after a letter in May 1989 setting out the provisions and the fact that it had not been conformed with, it was not tabled until late last year.

As the member has pointed out, it was almost three years after the original legislation. What has to be totally understood by the public watching and by the parliamentary secretary is that Orders in Council and regulations are laws that affect all of us, that do not come for debate before the House of Parliament, and the provisions are set out for a reason.

In this particular case, as has been pointed out by my friend in the Liberal Party, the minister has turned his back on the matter unintentionally, through oversight or by lack of proper documentation or advice by his ministerial advisers. The point, I believe and I simply want to emphasize this before closing, is that this is mandatory. It is obligatory for the minister to do this within that specified period of time and intentionally or unintentionally he has breached his duty to the House, I would submit. That in itself is contempt of the House.

As the member has pointed out, this is the only forum in which that can properly be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker: I have listened very carefully to the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River—

[*Translation*]

—and the hon. parliamentary secretary. I especially thank the hon. member for his statement in which he clearly said that it was not the minister's intention, but I think that some consideration is necessary before I render a decision.

[*English*]

I thank also the hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt and I have listened carefully to his comments. I also thank the House for co-operating with the Chair and hon. members while this important and complex argument was put to the House. I shall try to respond as quickly as possible.

Tributes

I do take into account the fact that there seems to be general agreement. There was not an intention on the part of the minister. I also must say that the law seems very clear, and I shall have to deal with it as I see it. I thank hon. members.

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[*Translation*]

TRIBUTES

THE LATE JEAN-PAUL MATTE AND GERALD WILLIAM BALDWIN

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take just a few minutes in this House to pay tribute to two of our former colleagues who passed away over the holidays and whom I knew in a special way. In a sense, they were very similar because they were real gentlemen and were respected on both sides of the House. I refer to the former member for Champlain, Jean-Paul Matte, and the former member for Peace River, Ged Baldwin.

Jean-Paul Matte was a very good friend of mine. He was elected in 1962 and remained a member until 1968. Later, after he lost his election, he had the opportunity to work in my office. He was very unpretentious, a businessman who was quite involved in his community in Champlain and particularly in the town of St. Tite. He was really close to the people and extremely dedicated.

• (1530)

I would call him the salt of the House of Commons, the kind of member who did not seek publicity but was always watchful and attentive to solve his constituents' problems. He had quite a good sense of humour, outside this House, yet while here, he was very modest and pleasant. When he was sent on delegations abroad, members very often came back saying that Jean-Paul was the most popular member of the delegation. His pleasant manners, down-to-earth language, sense of humour and extreme kindness made him a first-class diplomat, although he was in fact, with great honour, an ordinary businessman from rural Quebec.

His death will be a great loss to me personally, to my wife and to my children. When I went down to the riding of St. Maurice, we very often shared the same car and we