

### Supply

agreement between the Parties. It is clear that equity is served if Opposition days are allocated to the Parties in proportion to their relative representation in the House. As I have already stated, the NDP constitute about one-quarter of the total Opposition. Indeed, the NDP House Leader acknowledged time and again last day that for every three Conservative Opposition days they should be entitled to one. By my calculation that makes a 75 to 25 per cent ratio. They are entitled to receive one-quarter of the Opposition days which occur each year. The Standing Orders provide that 25 days will be devoted to the consideration of the business of Supply in each year. When you divide 25 by four, one can see that the NDP's share of Opposition days works out to six and one-quarter days per annum.

Needless to say, we simply cannot divide the days in this manner. For that reason we have attempted to average out the distribution of days in such a manner as to ensure that over the life of the Parliament the NDP would receive their full allocation of days. Thus, in three out of four years the NDP would receive six days and in the fourth year they would receive seven. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the NDP received seven days in the last Supply year. Two of those days concluded in votes.

The Supply year concludes at the end of March in each year. Since that time the NDP have received two Opposition days. It is readily apparent to anyone that they have been under-allocated days in this semester if one judges solely on the basis of the working ratio of one-quarter to three-quarters which I have outlined. However, this under-allocation can be explained when one takes into account the fact that the NDP were successful last November in convincing the Chair that calendar years should be considered when calculating the allocation of Opposition days.

In order to meet both standards, we ensured that the NDP were given more than the number of Opposition days to which they were entitled in the last Supply year by allowing three NDP motions, including one votable motion, to come before the House for debate in the period which ended in March. While that Supply period was the final period in the last Supply year, it was also the first period in the current calendar year. Thus the NDP were over-allocated days by both measures.

This fact left us with a problem in the current period. If we were to give the NDP a sixth day before the end of this period, they would have exhausted their full entitlement of Opposition days for the entire calendar year by the first week in June. We would then have been faced with the problem of whether or not the rights of the minority demanded that the NDP be given a day in the fall semester without regard to the fact that they would have already used their full allotment for this year. If, on the other hand, we were to wait until the fall semester to allocate further days to the NDP, it would be possible to ensure an even distribution of days while offending neither formula.

• (1120)

Is there some iron-clad rule that states that the distribution of Opposition days must be mathematically correct in each Supply period rather than equitable over the full year? The precedents certainly do not support such a contention. Although based upon the one-quarter-three-quarter ratio that we have employed, the NDP would be entitled to precisely 3.25 days in the first semester, 1.25 days in the second semester and 1.75 days in the third semester. The actual allotments have been 2.75 and 2.25 days respectively. Thus it can be seen that the NDP have always been under-allocated days in the first semester, over-allocated days 50 per cent of the time in the second semester and always over-allocated days in the final semester.

In my submission, therefore, it would be perfectly consistent with the general pattern of allocation of Opposition days over the past four years if the motion proposed by the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West were to be selected for debate today. Furthermore, that is the only option which allows the distribution of Opposition days to conform to both the Supply year and the calendar year systems of allotting Supply days.

However, there are two other good reasons for not selecting the motion put forward by the NDP. Both of these reasons relate to the procedural regularity of the motion. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the motion proposed by the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy) was placed on the Order Paper prior to the last Opposition day. At that time it was filed with the Table pursuant to Standing Order 62(9). Standing Order 62(9) reads as follows:

In each of the periods described in section (5) of this Standing Order, not more than two opposition motions shall be no-confidence motions against the government. The duration of proceedings on any such motion shall be stated in the notice relating to the appointing of an allotted day or days for those proceedings. On the last day appointed for proceedings on a no-confidence motion, at fifteen minutes before the ordinary time of daily adjournment the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and forthwith put, without further debate or amendment, every question necessary to dispose of the said proceeding.

The Opposition motion that was debated last Thursday was also filed pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 62(9) and was the second and final motion permitted under that rule for the current Supply period. Following that Opposition day, the motion filed by the Hon. Member for Churchill should, in my opinion, have been dropped from the Order Paper because it could not be proceeded with in the Supply period in which it had been filed.

Even if one is of the view that the motion could stay on the Order Paper until such time as a new Supply period was reached and the provisions for motions under Standing Order 62(9) revived, there remains significant doubt as to the procedural regularity of selecting this motion for debate today.

I recognize the fact that the Hon. Member for Churchill wrote to the Table requesting that the motion remain on the Order Paper so that it might be taken up and considered today. Indeed, I have the text of his letter to the Table and I would like to cite it in support of my argument. The letter is to Jim Cooke of English *Journals*, Room 128N, dated June 4,