

Official Opposition and we would not be getting more than we are entitled to.

The House Leader of the Official Opposition raises a number of different points. In the early part of his submission he talked about the time of filing. If the actual time of filing were to be a consideration in determining who should be given the allotted day, it would be possible for any one of the Parties to file everything at the beginning of a session and therefore pre-empt anyone else from getting an opportunity to seek an allotted day. The House Leader of the Official Opposition indicates that he offered us an allotted day. That is true; I accept that. However, I asked for an allotted day with a vote. I suggested that we felt we were entitled to an allotted day with a vote. The dispute arose over whether if we took a day without a vote we would therefore lose the opportunity to have a vote on a motion that we felt was important. You know, Sir, that voting is one of the ways in which Members of Parliament are able to put clearly on the record their support for or opposition to any matter before the House.

The House Leader for the Official Opposition tells you that some time ago we were given an additional allotted day. You may recall, however, that the reason we got the additional day was in order to accommodate the Conservatives who wanted to have a day without a vote on the day prior to their convention. They did not want to have the motion in their name. They asked us if we would take the allotted day in order to free their Members from having to be in attendance in the House of Commons. We, of course, in our normal generous way, accepted our responsibility to accommodate their needs. It is clear that we have not been given, nor have we requested, more than we are entitled to.

In the last session, on November 22, 1983 a question similar to the one now before you was before the Acting Speaker Corbin. The decision was made in favour of the motion which was standing in the name of a New Democratic Party member. The Acting Speaker said:

Past practice indicates that Parties in opposition to the Government, other than the Official Opposition, have received their share of allotted days in any Supply period.

That is not in a calendar year or since the beginning of time, but "in any Supply period". He went on to say:

Since this is the fourth day of a five-day period, and taking into account that three of the days have been used by Hon. Members of the Official Opposition, it is my intention to put to the House the motion standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap.

The situation which pertained then is almost identical to the situation which you are now faced with. The Official Opposition has already had its share of the allotted days in this Supply period. To date there have been 11 allotted days, nine of them taken by the Official Opposition and two of them allocated to the New Democratic Party. If this was the last day, we could reasonably expect to be allocated this day on the basis of their having already used nine of the allotted days in this Supply period. Had the Official Opposition not chosen to put this day down as a votable day, we might have been prepared to attempt to negotiate further for the final Supply day which will presumably come some time before the end of

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June. Unfortunately, that negotiation process does not seem to be arriving at any satisfactory conclusion.

I ask you simply to reaffirm the preliminary judgment that you made and to agree that in this Supply period the ratio of days between the two Parties, given that there are 13 days, would be more fairly reflected if three were allocated to us and 10 to the Conservatives. That is a reasonable reflection of the numbers in the House of Commons. It is 30 per cent rather than 25 per cent. It is three to one. If that were decided we would find that desirable and acceptable.

I would like to clear up a misunderstanding which I had. You are correct, Mr. Speaker. In fact the motion of February 14 was a votable motion. I therefore do not want to continue with that submission before you. However, I do point out that, taking that votable motion and this votable motion and looking at the three trimesters, or even looking at the single trimester, we would not have had more than our share of votable motions during this period in the history of this particular Parliament.

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I will very briefly put on the record that we consider, as you surely do, that Standing Order 62(4)(c) must receive its application. It reads:

When notice has been given of two or more motions by Members in opposition to the government for consideration on an allotted day, the Speaker shall have power to select which of the proposed motions shall have precedence in that sitting.

You have seen fit to hear the House Leader of each Opposition Party; that is in accordance with recent practice. I consider and hope that this is sufficient for you to make a selection now.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair thanks the Hon. President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard) for reminding the Chair of its obligation.

Having taken note that two notices of motions were filed yesterday evening, the Chair had anticipated the discussion which has taken place. There are two distinct issues to be addressed; the first is the distribution of allotted days between the Opposition Parties in any given period; the second issue is the distribution of allotted days ending in a vote of non-confidence in the Government over the three Supply periods of the parliamentary calendar.

● (1140)

On both of these issues, the Chair cannot make a ruling which would apply in all cases. The Chair's selection must be based on the representations of the Parties in the House and also on what has happened, by agreement of the Parties concerned, in the immediate past Supply periods. These conditions can vary from Parliament to Parliament and Hon. Members will remember that it was not so long ago that there were three Parties sitting in opposition in the House.

On November 22, 1983 the Chair exercised, I believe for the first time, its power of selection pursuant to Standing Order 62(4)(c). Faced with two motions on the Order Paper, the Acting Speaker chose an NDP motion because that Party had