

Speaker's Ruling

authority of the House, only the whole House could alter our rules and give the Speaker new direction.

[Translation]

The second part of last Thursday's discussion concerned issues raised by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader with respect to the counting of allotted days and those that can be votable. Under normal circumstances, as the Standing Orders explain, the supply cycle is divided into three periods ending on December 10, March 26 and June 30. Within each period, a specified number of allotted days are assigned to the opposition. The total throughout the three periods is 25, of which a maximum of eight are to be designated votable and, of these, no more than four motions can be votable within any one period of the cycle.

• (1520)

[English]

A special order of last spring took into account the short session in the fall of 1988 and the commencement of the spring sitting only in April of 1989, which was later than usual. This special order provided a different arrangement for the allotment of supply days, and the number of them which would be votable. That special order extended into December, 1989, and took precedence over the Standing Orders and the usual calculation of the supply days for that period. I take the point of the parliamentary secretary that the supply cycle is normally calculated in the way he suggested, that is, that the period which ends December 10, is the first period of the cycle. Normally in the period ending December 10, Standing Order 81(8) stipulates that six days be allotted to supply of which a maximum of four could be votable. As it happened, the special order provided for 11 allotted days and of these, six came to a vote, two more than is usually permissible under the Standing Orders but which were allowed by the special order.

From this, I believe it is logical and fair to calculate from the period that ended December 10, the opposition would normally be allowed four motions to come to a vote and therefore has exercised its option fully by

designating four votable supply motions. Therefore, within the two periods that remain in the supply cycle ending June 30, four more motions can come to a vote. As it has happened, the opposition in the period ending March 26 has designated four of the motions allotted to them as votable. In consequence, there remains no more votable motions in the supply cycle which ends on June 30, 1990. As of today, the opposition will have used all of the eight votable motions available to them in the annual supply calendar.

I fully understand and appreciate how difficult the issue of supply can be. I also want the House to understand that my decision last Friday was not made lightly. The Chair is also very much aware of the consequences of a vote on Friday. My only guide however is fair play. The rules apply to both sides of the House in all circumstances. I want to thank the hon. members who contributed to the discussions of these matters last week and I hope this ruling has clarified the circumstances that now pertain to the final supply period which begins tomorrow.

The hon. member on a point of order.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, just for clarification in light of your very last comment, "both sides of the House in all circumstances". We are now left in the position as a House that any notice can be embargoed by any member, whoever gives notice, whether it is a government member or an opposition member. Anything in our rules requiring notice, we can indeed embargo it. I think that is what I heard.

I would really like clarification on that point, that members on both sides of the House wherever notice is required can embargo it and wait till the notice paper comes out, whether we are talking about closure, or whatever.

Mr. Speaker: It may not be satisfactory to members to have this rule, but I tried to set out in quite a long judgment the fact that that has been the practice. It has been done again and again. It happens on both sides of the House. Hon. members on both sides of the House know that that is so. That is the situation.

The hon. member will also know, as other hon. member will that I made a specific reference to the fact