

*Government Orders*

However, I have received very courteous messages from the hon. member for Richelieu. I have listened carefully to what he said and I would be very pleased to meet with him and also to arrange a meeting with some of the officials who took part in the move. As far as I am concerned, his right to hold his place open on this question of privilege will remain.

I will make arrangements with the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to withdraw something I said at the end. A member pointed his finger at me and insulted me and I added one last word to my sentence which was not at all meant for you but rather for him. Nevertheless, I wish to withdraw that last sentence.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the hon. member.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean):** Mr. Speaker, further to the remarks of the hon. member for Richelieu, I do not think that we have to make it an emotional issue, or politicize it, but I believe that it raises a problem which should be resolved in that Parliament is a place where members have rights that must be respected and are protected by the Speaker of the House. We know the Speaker. We know you and hold you to be a democrat and someone who is particularly devoted to the interests of Parliament and the protection of members' rights.

But the question was raised, Mr. Speaker, and it is as follows: Does the Speaker of the House have the absolute right to have his assistants and subordinates enter locked offices when the member is absent and without his knowledge. The question might not concern members much today because it happened to a Bloc Quebecois member, but if it happened to a member from another party, perhaps members would be a little more concerned. I would ask this House to deal with the issue. Some administrative body should look into it, but there is a fundamental distinction between the administrative right to assign office space and the right to enter a locked office without a warrant.

Does this mean that members must from now on protect themselves by installing their own lock and having their own key?

**Mr. Speaker:** I listened with some concern to the statement by the hon. member and naturally I took some interest in the subject. As I said, maybe after meeting the

hon. member for Richelieu, we can find a satisfactory answer.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[*English*]

**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

## AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre (p. 19027) and amendment of Mr. Dingwall (p. 19156).

## SPEAKER'S RULING

**Mr. Speaker:** On Tuesday, March 26, 1991, when Government Motion No. 30 to amend the Standing Orders was first before the House, the hon. member for Kamloops rose on a point of order to ask the Chair to rule that certain aspects of that motion were "in whole or in part improperly before the House" and "in whole or in part out of order".

His focus of attention was on paragraph 30 which he characterized as proposing "to amend the right of the Commons to debate supply before it is granted to the Crown", and on paragraph 20 which he said introduces "a new Standing Order which can over-ride the failure of the minister to obtain unanimous consent from the House".

The hon. member sought to establish four points which he set out as follows:

First, that these provisions seek to erode the historic authority of the House and the rights of its members and are thus contemptuous of the House as they will tend to diminish its dignity and impede members in the discharge of their functions.

Second, these proposals exceed those limits imposed by the Constitution and by statute and the power of the House to regulate its internal affairs.

Third, adoption of these proposals would be a *de facto* amendment to those limiting statutes and are thus an attempt to achieve by simple motion changes which should both be statutory and constitutional.

and,

Fourth,—our traditions and practice require that they be found out of order.

The hon. member's second and third points involving as they do a definition of the limits of the Constitution and other statutes have given the Chair some pause. The hon. member argues that acceptance of the proposals at issue would make a *de facto* change to the Parliament of Canada Act and to the Constitution Act by amending our privileges by means of simple Standing Order changes.