

Supply

Under Standing Order 62(4)(c), you have the responsibility, Mr. Speaker, of selecting which Opposition Members' motion will be put to the House for debate. I would ask you to call the motion standing in the name of my colleague, the Hon. Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe. I would ask that you do that, if not for the reasons I have just outlined, then because the Hon. Member had a similar motion standing in his name on the Order Paper which was not selected by the Acting Speaker last November. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the New Democratic Party should not be permitted to hijack an Opposition Day out from under the Hon. Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe twice in a row.

If equity is to be the determining factor in the selection of today's Opposition Day motion, and if the protection of the rights of individual Members is central to your decision, I believe the motion of my hon. colleague should be the one to be selected for debate today.

● (1125)

Mr. Speaker: Did the Chair understand the Hon. Member to say there had been one motion voted by the NDP this year?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: On February 14.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I want first of all to say I regret very much that you have been put in the position of having to make a choice. I know the Chair does not enjoy having to make decisions such as this and I would have hoped that we could have worked it out in advance by agreement. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

I want to acknowledge at the outset the fine working arrangement that has developed between myself and the House Leader for the Conservative Party. He is, under normal circumstances, a person of impeccable honour and he works diligently at his job. I was therefore surprised to hear his submission. He knows full well, Sir, that in fact, even on the basis of mathematical calculation, what he has submitted is inaccurate. That, I think, is where we begin.

The Conservatives, as the Official Opposition, have consistently operated on the basis of the NDP being one-quarter, 25 per cent, of the Opposition. However, Sir, if you were to make a calculation you would find that there are three Conservatives to every one New Democrat. That would leave any thinking individual with the impression that there should therefore be three Opposition motions assigned to the Official Opposition and one to the NDP. That is all we are asking for. For every three motions that the Official Opposition puts forward, we in this Party, as the minority, should be entitled to one.

Having said that, we also contend that—

Mr. Forrestall: How can you say that without tongue in cheek?

Mr. Deans: I can say it without tongue in cheek because it is factual. We also contend that we are entitled to a votable motion. However the Hon. House Leader for the Official Opposition puts it, there can be no argument over the statis-

tics. If you do it in this trimester, Mr. Speaker, in 1984 there would be 13 days allotted. Of those, two would be votable days. We contend, on the basis of three to one, that if the Conservatives get ten of those days, which is what they would get if we were given this day, we would be satisfied. Out of 13, the Conservatives get ten and we get three. That is all we are asking for; that is all we expect in the interest of fairness.

You will have noted, I am sure, that the Conservatives have put down for today a votable motion. If we are not allocated this day, that means there is no votable motion available after the vote is taken today at six o'clock. Therefore, it would not be possible, even if we were to be allotted the next allotted day, for us to be given a vote during this trimester. I contend that in fairness, which is all we ask for, we are entitled to one voting day.

I will now go back three trimesters. In the last trimester there were seven days, five taken by the Conservatives. They asked us to take two and we did, but we got no vote. In the previous trimester, the third trimester of last year, there were five allotted days. Four were taken by the Conservatives; one was offered to us, which we accepted, without a vote.

● (1130)

Looking at the third trimester of last year, the first trimester of this year, and this trimester which ends at the end of June, there have been 25 allotted days, or will have been. If you were to decide today that we were entitled to the day, then 19 of them would have been allotted to the Conservative Party and six of them to the NDP. That is as close as a three-to-one ratio could ever be. That is in keeping with the numbers within the House of Commons.

In addition to that, if you were to decide, as you have indicated you might in your preliminary judgment, that we were entitled to this day and that it is a voting day, it will be the first voting day that we have been granted in the last three trimesters. Taking that into account, it would seem that we would be entitled to have this particular—

Mr. Speaker: The Chair must interrupt the Hon. Member because there is a factual argument. Was February 14 a votable motion in the name of the New Democratic Party or not?

Mr. Deans: February 14?

Mr. Speaker: Of this year.

Mr. Deans: I will have it checked.

Mr. Speaker: It appears that it was. If so, the Hon. Member will have to take note of it.

Mr. Deans: I will have it checked. I do not have that in front of me. Be that as it may, it does not alter the argument on balance. I will come back to it. I put to you that even if it turned out that the fourteenth was a voting day, that would give us two voting days in three trimesters. Even at that, the balance would still be tipped very heavily in favour of the