

*Veterans Affairs*

and DVA will successfully and smoothly relocate in Prince Edward Island.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Marcel Dionne (Chicoutimi):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today of the decentralization of DVA headquarters to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Public servants work for the entire country and must therefore get closer to the realities, the needs and the desires of the various communities they serve. Public servants in Ottawa have been blamed for their so called ignorance, insensitivity and isolation from the rest of Canada. The proposed move, as all others, is aimed at reducing the reason for these accusations and to make the public service more aware of the concerns harboured by the people it serves. Also, the proposed move of the veterans affairs headquarters is extremely important because it corresponds to the wishes of each of the previous governments which have tried to bridge the gap between the levels of economic well being enjoyed in the different areas of the country. The move of DVA headquarters will give Prince Edward Island the economic boost it needs. Also, Charlottetown can provide headquarters with all it needs to continue to give adequate service to Canadian veterans and their dependants.

Charlottetown was chosen because it has administrative support and clerical workers who can easily be trained and assigned to the various divisions of the department and organizations—

● (1730)

*[English]*

**Mr. Cossitt:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I should like to draw attention to the fact that at the time when I rose a moment ago there was not a quorum in the House. I believe that 20 members are required. At that time there was not a quorum, unless someone rushed in hurriedly since then.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Either the hon. member rises to call a quorum, or he does not. Would he kindly inform the Chair whether he is calling the quorum?

**Mr. Cossitt:** Yes I am, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** May I explain to hon. members that there is a procedure for counting members to see if there is a quorum, and it will take a moment to go through it. If I understand the hon. member for Leeds-Grenville (Mr. Cossitt) correctly, he rises again on a point of order, we hope not the same one.

**Mr. Cossitt:** Since I raised the quorum call, about four members rushed in on the other side. I think a count should be taken of those who were here at the time the question was raised, not counting those who came in later.

**Mr. Lefebvre:** Read the orders.

**Mr. Hopkins:** I would like to bring to the attention of the House the fact that when the hon. member rose on this point of order, I took a count of members in the House and I found that there were in fact 20 members here when he was on his feet the first time.

**Mr. Cossitt:** No, 18.

**Mr. Regan:** Let us not quarrel over two.

**An hon. Member:** Did you count yourself?

**Mr. Cossitt:** Yes, I counted myself.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Order, please. The Chair has a difficulty. The hon. member for Leeds-Grenville has raised the difficulty himself, that is to say, that at the moment he rose, he himself says, to call the quorum, there was a quorum present.

**Mr. Cossitt:** No, I did not say that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** If I understood the hon. member correctly, he used some language to say, at the moment he rose, that he was calling the quorum but that at that moment there was not a quorum.

**Mr. Cossitt:** That is correct. There were 18 members in the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Then it is clear that the Chair has a difficulty because the Chair does not have in its possession an electronic *Hansard* which would permit the Chair to do a retroactive count. If the hon. member wishes to call a quorum and to ask, on the basis of good faith, those hon. members who were not present when he called the quorum to retire, then I suppose that perhaps this might be observed. Perhaps those members who were not present when the hon. member called a quorum could remove themselves from the chamber. But the Chair is in no position to ask each individual member whether he was or was not here at the time that a quorum was called.

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Speaker, this is matter which concerns me quite often. Many a time in the last month or so I have been tempted to raise the same point of order. I think that our attendance should be a lot better than it is. But, in all fairness, I think that the rules should be noted. If the rule is noted, then, I am afraid, you do not have to ask members whether they were here at the time the point was raised. Citation 209, on page 73 of Beauchesne's fifth edition reads as follows:

While the House is being counted the doors remain open and members can come in during the whole time occupied by the counting.

So if there are 20 members here now, all I can say to my friend, the hon. member for Leeds-Grenville, (Mr. Cossitt) is, try again some time when there are only 12 or 15 members here.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!