

I would remind the hon. gentleman that not even for the purpose of looking after the prosperity of the great order of which he is the grand master—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Grand sovereign.

Mr. BOURASSA. Oh, yes. I have such republican tendencies that I always forget the bigger titles. Not even in order to preserve the prosperity of that valuable order is a member allowed to take leave of absence without permission of the House, and go to its convention, and there not merely give lessons to the Speaker of this House, but give lessons in politeness to the King. I regret that the hon. gentleman has not chosen another of his colleagues to raise the point of order and give lessons to the Speaker on the observance of the laws in these matters, and I hope that before he again undertakes to teach respect for the laws to the Speaker, he will not again give such an example of rebellion as he has given in the last few days, at the same time breaking a rule of this House.

The PRIME MINISTER (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier). Mr. Speaker, one thing, at all events, is certain with regard to the motion which has been made by my hon. friend, that whether the law has been observed or whether it has been violated, no harm has been done to anybody. My hon. friend has, I think, drawn the true conclusion upon the question, that if the House was not legally adjourned on Friday night, it continued in session until some time between 12 o'clock and 1 o'clock, Monday night or Tuesday morning. The House may have been in session, not only on Saturday, but on Sunday. Even if it was, no harm was done, although nobody was present, and the House was adjourned effectively, if not legally. My hon. friend himself, I think, was present on Friday night, when it was adjourned or pretended to be adjourned. At all events, if I understand my hon. friend, he was anxious himself to adjourn. He did not want the House to go on sitting. On the other side of the House the conclusion had been come to that the House had sat long enough, and that a recess should take place. What more could be done? As I am informed, the only thing to be done was to send for the Speaker, who at that time was in his room; but the messenger, not finding him immediately, went for the Deputy Speaker. Both came, but it was too late; my hon. friend from West Huron was too quick for them, and the mace had left the Table. For my part, I acquit the Sergeant-at-arms of any intention of breaking the constitution when he removed from the Table 'that bauble' as Cromwell styled it. I acquit also the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of not being in the House at the time, they being in their rooms and liable to be sent for at any moment. But let us go one step fur-

Mr. BOURASSA.

ther, and let us suppose that both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker were unavoidably absent; what was to be done under such circumstances? Was the House to go on sitting for ever, though it wanted to adjourn, and was my hon. friend from East Grey himself to remain glued to his chair though he wanted to leave it? I think myself that this is a case where necessity knows no law, and common sense must prevail. This is a case where common sense is law and law is common sense. If at any time during the session of the House it happens for any unavoidable cause that neither the Speaker nor the Deputy Speaker is in the House, then the House must go on sitting for ever, or some means must be found for giving effect to the will of the majority of the members present. I will recall to my hon. friend a precedent to show that when the law is imperfect and insufficient to serve the ends of common sense, the common sense of the House will assert itself. I forget the year, but the incident is well known, and ought to be well remembered by every member of this House. I think it was about 1881 or 1882, when Mr. Parnell was carrying on a policy of obstruction. At that time the cloture did not exist in England. When the House had been in session forty hours or thereabouts, Mr. Speaker Brand took the law into his own hands and put the question to adjourn the House, though it was against the rules of the House as existing at that time, and the question was voted upon and the House was adjourned. I am not aware that his action was ever reprimanded; on the contrary, I think it was approved of by common consent. There was at the time no law on the subject, but the will of parliament could not be baulked for ever; so common sense asserted itself, and Mr. Speaker Brand took the law into his own hands. I am not prepared to say whether or not our laws should be amended to meet such a contingency as I have just referred to. I was glad to hear the remarks of my hon. friend, that he has no blame either for the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker, but that he simply wanted to have a fair question answered. Whether or not under the circumstances the proceedings of the House were valid, and whether an adjournment could take place or not, is a matter which I do not consider of very great moment; but if the House considers that there is a question to be investigated, perhaps it would be well to have some expression of opinion upon it from members who take an interest in the question. For my part, I cannot see that any law has been violated. I think that under the circumstances the adjournment was perfectly legal. I may say, moreover, that I understand that Mr. Speaker has power to call a member to replace him in the Chair, and that this may take place not only immediately, but in an hour or two hours or three hours—that he can