

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 11, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

POINT OF ORDER

RECORDED DIVISIONS—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: Before proceeding to the daily routine of business, I want to give my ruling on a matter raised by the hon. member for Calgary Northeast a few days ago.

As all hon. members know, there were some technical difficulties with the *Votes and Proceedings* of Wednesday, June 3, 1992 in recording the divisions on motions of amendment at report stage of Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada. A reprint was immediately ordered to accurately reflect the results recorded by the Clerk.

In his point of order, the hon. member for Calgary Northeast was concerned by the fact that some of the names appearing under the listing for paired members also appeared under the "yeas" or "nays".

[*Translation*]

I would appear therefore that some members whose names were paired with others indicating that they would not be voting had in fact cast votes either for or against certain motions.

[*English*]

Should or could action be taken by either the Speaker or the House in regard to this situation.

• (1010)

Standing Order 44.1 specifically deals with paired members. It explains that a register of paired members is kept at the table "in which any member of the government party and any member of an opposition party may have their names entered together by their respective Whips to indicate that they will not take part in any record division"; independent members sign in their own right.

[*Translation*]

The names of these paired members are inscribed immediately following the list of "yeas" and "nays" for each recorded division.

[*English*]

However, the Standing Orders are completely silent on the question of a broken pair; there is no penalty provided for, nor any corrective action suggested. As the 21st edition of *Erskine May* explains on page 350:

The Speaker has ruled that agreements to pair are private arrangements between Members and in no sense matters in which either he or the House can intervene.

[*Translation*]

Although Westminster's rules relating to pairing are different from those employed in Canada, the basic principle enunciated in *May* holds true for our practice, that is to say: a pairing agreement is a private arrangement in which neither the House nor the Speaker can intervene, according to the Standing Orders as now written.

[*English*]

Any change to our current practice would require amendments to our Standing Orders. The Standing Committee on House Management which has as part of its permanent mandate the power to review and report on the Standing Orders, procedure and practice in the House, may wish to look into this question. I thank the hon. member for Calgary Northeast for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES CONTROL ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (for the Minister of National Health and Welfare) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-85, an act respecting the control of psychoactive substances and their precursors and to amend the Criminal Code, the Food and Drugs Act and the Proceeds of Crime (money laundering) Act and repeal the Narcotic Control Act in consequence thereof.