

*Oral Questions*

I wish also to draw the attention of the House to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Geoff Smith, Minister for Lands, Queensland, Australia.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Government House Leader to indicate what the business of the House will be for the next few days.

[*English*]

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will continue with the Bloc opposition day. Tomorrow we will begin by returning to the debate on Bill C-22 regarding Pearson airport, followed by second reading of Bill C-52, the government services and public works reorganization bill.

On Monday we will begin with second reading of Bill C-53, the Canadian heritage reorganization bill, followed by Bill C-52 if that was not completed on Friday. We will follow this with Bill C-42, the miscellaneous amendments to the Criminal Code.

On Tuesday and Wednesday of next week the business will be in the following order. We will begin with second reading of Bill C-51, the Canada Grains Act, followed by second reading of Bill C-47, the foreign affairs reorganization bill.

If the House has not already completed Bills C-52 and C-42 we will then turn to them in the order mentioned. We will then return to other debates already begun but not completed in an order that we will consult on with the other parties.

On Thursday and Friday of next week we are proposing that a take note debate on the initiative of the government be held on the discussion paper on social security reform which is to be tabled, I believe, next Wednesday. This is to enable members to make their views known in this important, ongoing national discussion.

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[*Translation*]

**POINT OF ORDER****PROCEDURE IN THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order on two matters. I also want to mention, since it just happened, that after Question Period, you called the

usual Thursday question, but I always thought that after Question Period, Questions of Privilege and Points of Order were called first.

● (1505)

I just mention this in passing. It is not a point of order but I think it is important to bring this up, because we have certain traditions and customs.

**The Speaker:** The Chair recognizes members as items are called. I did not see anyone else. If the hon. member is referring to himself, I did not see him, except when the hon. member for Roberval was speaking. That is why I got back to him, but I am very much aware of the Standing Orders of this House.

**Mr. Charest:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I realize it may sometimes be difficult to see this far, but it is all part of what we expect the Chair to be able to do. That is why I sent you a note, advising you that I wished to rise on a point of order.

I wanted to raise the following matter. During Question Period, you rose twice to ask to whom members were directing their questions. To my knowledge—and my memory is not infallible—when a member of the opposition puts a question, it is necessarily directed to the government. He addresses the Chair, in other words, he must address the government through the Chair. As for the particular person to whom the question is directed, that person is indicated only as a matter of courtesy.

I am merely pointing out what I assume to be the usual custom in this House, since the government is perfectly free to reply through any member of Cabinet.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member is absolutely right. There is no doubt about that. The second time was indeed a mistake and I apologize. If that was the purpose of your point of order, you are absolutely right that when a question is put by a member, that question is directed to the government. I agree with that, if that was the purpose of your point of order.

**Mr. Charest:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I may finish my comments, since there was another matter I wished to raise. You may have noticed that my question was directed to the Prime Minister. Like other members in this House, I had understood the Prime Minister was to be present during Question Period. That is why I directed my question to him. Subsequently, you said that the Prime Minister was not in the House.

I must admit this bothers me, and I will explain. We also have a Standing Order that is well-known in this House, which prohibits anyone from drawing attention to the absence of other members. A Standing Order that is usually observed.

**The Speaker:** Dear colleague, you are absolutely right. I was at fault and I apologize. It will not happen again, and I accept your comments in the spirit in which they were intended.