

*Point of Order*

If we leave ourselves open to the notion that the opposition can put down a motion in perpetuity about Fridays that stops us from ever having Friday opposition days without votes, then I think we are running counter to the intent of those regulations and to the intent of the McGrath committee and its efforts to help us develop a better way of conducting the nation's business.

**Mr. Speaker:** I will hear the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier in a moment. I want to ask a question. Is not part of the problem that there is a time period into which two more supply days must occur between now and Monday? Am I incorrect in that?

**Mr. Hawkes:** Mr. Speaker, I think you will find that the parliamentary secretary to the government House Leader is prepared to rise at some point today—it could be immediately if you prefer—on another point of order related to the number of supply days that are left in this period. Some arguments can be made.

But we need certitude for the immediate future and in the long term. Do our Standing Orders provide for the possibility that the opposition, either or both parties, can put a motion on notice requiring a Friday vote which sits there in perpetuity and can be activated on any particular Friday that the government chooses to name? If the government rises on a Thursday and designates Friday as an opposition day—which constitutes a rather regular pattern around here, that we give 24 hours' notice of the business for the next day—that faces a 48-hour notice period that is on that Order Paper in perpetuity. I think then that we have obviated the whole purpose of treating confidence votes as very important and something on which members should clearly have 48 hours' notice when they occur on a Friday.

So I am saying that if we designate tomorrow today, then the vote should occur on Monday because that would constitute the necessary notice to members.

**Mr. Speaker:** While we are discussing this we may as well go on to the next stage. Are we in a position where two more supply days must be allotted between now and Monday? If that is the case, the hon. member puts forth a very reasoned position. But if, on the other hand, we are caught in a situation in which two supply days must take place between now and Monday, whatever merit the hon. member's argument has does not seem to me to

solve the problem. I am quite prepared to hear the whole argument now, and I think maybe we should.

I will come to the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier in a moment.

**Mr. Gauthier:** We have arguments to make too, Mr. Speaker. This is a dialogue.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Speaker:** I will hear the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) in a minute.

[*English*]

**Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to add perhaps the second element of the point of order raised by my colleague, the Whip for the government.

As the Speaker is aware, there was a special order passed in this House on April 4, 1989, and June 27, 1989, which provided for six allotted days to be votable in the September to December supply period. This order superseded the Standing Orders providing for a total of no more than four votable supply days in any one period. For example, September to December, January to March, or the other period of April to June.

If we go back through what has happened we will find there were votable opposition days, or allotted days, on October 2, 12, 19, 30, 31, and then again on December 5 and 6, again on February 1, and another one, the eighth, on March 15.

As a result, with the six allotted days in the September to December 1989 supply period, and assuming that a supply cycle runs from September to the end of June, then adding the two votable days in the period that we are now in of January to March, I would argue that the opposition has had the maximum allowable votable days, which is the eight. We think that that is the case. As a result of that we argue that Friday cannot therefore be a votable supply day.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am going to hear the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier in a moment and I am going to hear him completely and fully. What was the basis upon which the special order was made? What was the understanding? Am I supposed to believe that as a consequence of that understanding the opposition gave up two supply days? That is the proposition that is being put to me. Maybe they did, but I want to know.