

Privilege

opposition. No government member and no Cabinet minister were there.

Mr. Speaker, I will leave it to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands to point out that we have now recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings* the fact that none of the Cabinet ministers was in attendance. They were not in the House.

An Hon. Member: Shame.

Mr. Gauthier: Indeed I will let the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands make that point, Mr. Speaker, because he is the one who now and then tries to convince the government that it should always have a minister in the House, particularly on a day when we are debating supply, or authority for the government to spend money, which is subject to the approval of the House of Commons. After all, the government cannot spend money without the agreement of the House. The government introduces a supply motion in the House and seeks authority to spend money.

I will leave that argument to my colleague from Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I want to get back to the argument about restoring the opposition day.

• (1520)

You know, Mr. Speaker, that Standing Order 67(1)(p) provides— Excuse me, I am getting a little ahead of myself.

We ask that the opposition day be restored, Mr. Speaker, because the government itself interrupted debate; the government itself stopped proceedings by asking for a quorum count; the government itself, by not appearing here in the House for the debate or the quorum count, caused them to be too few members in the House to continue the debate.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the business of supply, or the budget estimates, is to present Parliament with the government's budget and non-budget proposals for the coming fiscal year. By forcing adjournment of the House and of the debate on the business of supply, the government's chief whip has overridden the Order Paper and Notice Paper. Furthermore, we think that the govern-

ment whip has prevented consideration of supply for the time being under a motion made in April 1989, you will recall, at the beginning of the second session of this Parliament by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret), who moved, "That the House consider the business of supply—" I will quote the English version of *Hansard* which I have in front of me.

[English]

At page 5 of *House of Commons Debates*, April 3, 1989, Business of Supply, moved by Mr. de Cotret, President of the Treasury Board:

Mr. Speaker, I move, in accordance with Standing Order 81,

That the House at its next sitting consider the business of supply.

The motion was agreed to and then there was a motion to adjourn by the then House Leader.

That is a continuing motion which stands on our *Order Paper* and allows for the supply proceedings which give the government the appropriations it needs to administer the country.

I believe, on the one hand, that the government by invoking quorum lost that item and also by its own doing caused that the day was lost to the opposition and therefore the privileges of all members to debate that motion were, in my view, breached by the government.

I want to refer to *Bourinot's Parliamentary Procedure*, Fourth Edition at page 217 in reference to quorum.

"(2) Whenever the speaker adjourns the house for want of a quorum, the time of the adjournment and the names of the members then present, shall be inserted in the Journal,"

That has been done, Mr. Speaker. It continues:

Accordingly when the attention of the Speaker has been called to the fact that there is no quorum present, he will proceed at once to count the house, and if there are not twenty members present, including himself, the clerk will take down the names, and the Speaker will then adjourn the house without a question first put until the usual hour on the next sitting day (m).

It continues at page 218:

A "count out"—

Which is the quorum call:

—will always supersede any question that is before the house; and if an order of the day for supply, or for the reading or committal of a bill, be under consideration at the time, and there is no quorum present,—