

Point of Order—Mr. Prud'homme

There is a debate going on in this Chamber. I do not ever recall in my time a debate going on in this House without simultaneous translation. The proceedings are going on in two official languages but we are not operating in two official languages.

I am looking for my earpiece in the desk, I am looking for an earpiece in the desk next. This is the first time since I came to this Chamber that proceedings are going on without them being available in two official languages. I think we are setting a very, very dangerous precedent.

I am also very disappointed that the Government which controls the agenda, and it is up to the Government to see that there is a quorum to walk over to the other House to get Royal Assent, has so few Members present. If we on our side walked out, they would not even have a quorum to get Royal Assent.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With reference to the point of order raised by my colleague from Parkdale—High Park while I too was astounded that the earphones were not here, I know that this had to be an oversight on the part of whoever happens to be responsible, because of course, never would anything like this take place deliberately. I would also like to say that I personally did not have a problem as the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) has such clear diction that the problem was non-existent.

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, I spoke in English, as is often the case in my case, and some object to that, but I choose that language first. I would hate to ruin the beautiful atmosphere of the summer for the staff. I do notice that the translation that we do not have. I appreciate my colleague from Toronto having reminded us that he could not listen to my words of wisdom in French, and I thank him for that. I would hope that the staff would not take that as being their mistake. Of course, the translation is available. I can see the translators through the window. However, it is the mechanics that we do not have on our desks.

I would not like this point to be mixed in with the point I raised earlier. I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Ottawa—Vanier and that is why I prefer your Honour rule on my point some day or send it to the appropriate committee to look into it. I could make a long speech on the words of the Hon. Member for

Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier), but I will not do it today, as long as I have the assurance of Your Honour that this will be looked into because Your Honour knows that it is not the first time I have raised this point.

[*Translation*]

That being said, I want to wish all Canadians the very best for Canada Day, in the other official language, since I notice that our translation problem has now been solved. Thank you.

• (1400)

[*English*]

Hon. David MacDonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak briefly on this point of order. First, it is a delight to see many of my colleagues on both sides of the House, even on the day before Canada Day.

The tradition of being called together for Royal Assent after a summer adjournment is not something new. In fact, the Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme), who started here even before I did, and several other Members, including the Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) and the Member from Toronto, were all members of a Government which on a regular basis, after we had completed our regular business, called Members back briefly for what is really a formality on the part of the House of Commons, that is going to meet our colleagues in the Senate and to observe Royal Assent.

I think it would be a mistake to turn this into a major public debate. I know that there are other colleagues from both sides of the House who are otherwise occupied in meetings. I am sure they would be more than happy to participate in the completion of this public business by being present for Royal Assent.

However, I think that what the Member for Saint-Denis has raised is in fact not a different tradition. We are in fact observing one of the oldest traditions in Parliament with which Members on all sides are all familiar. If the language used by the Deputy Chairman of Committees in adjourning the House at an early hour on Wednesday morning was not exactly correct, I think the sense was clearly understood by Members on all sides.

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, I object. I do not want to debate, but I certainly object to what the Hon. Member for Rosedale (Mr. MacDonald) has just said. For Marcel Prud'homme, Member of Parliament for