

Point of Order

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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[Translation]

POINT OF ORDER

WITHDRAWAL OF GOVERNMENT ORDER NO. 16 AND ALL RELEVANT AMENDMENTS

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): All summer long, Mr. Speaker, we wanted Parliament to be recalled to debate an important issue, namely the gulf crisis. On Monday, September 24, the Secretary of State introduced a motion. On September 27, my colleagues of the Official Opposition moved an amendment, and the New Democratic Party moved a sub-amendment. At 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 16, the Parliamentary Secretary to the minister who is the Government House Leader rose to seek the unanimous consent of the House, saying 'I got it, I ask that the NDP sub-amendment and the Official Opposition amendment be withdrawn. The minister's absence notwithstanding, I move, with unanimous consent, that a new motion be introduced'. So much for that. Here is one small detail which is recorded on page 14251: I refused to give unanimous consent. On Wednesday, the 17th, debate got under way in good faith on the resolution of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and on the amendment of the Official Opposition as well as on the sub-amendment of the New Democratic Party. The debate went on in good faith on Thursday.

I had drafted two speeches. I appreciate my colleagues calling to commend me for the approach I took while defending my role as a French Canadian, and I said so in French. I did not get any negative response in Quebec. I spoke about international issues. That is the speech I wanted to make instead of the other one I intended to deliver and which is written. I have it here. That one would have hurt. The House gave its unanimous consent, that tonight at 1 a.m. or earlier whenever members have spoken the question will be put, it will be accepted and the division on the sub-amendment, the amendment

and the resolution will take place tomorrow at 6 p.m. As a matter of fact, on October 9 the Minister of State for Youth had served notice that if the debate did not end he would eventually—and that is his right. He did not. But that is noted in the documents on which I worked throughout the weekend.

The debate ended Thursday night, in good faith. I went home at 4.30 Friday morning. The security staff will confirm that I went over the whole debate. They would not know whether I did, but they saw me leave my office after 4 a.m. I was satisfied that at last every member had been allowed to speak freely on a good resolution.

But on Friday the 19— You know, Mr. Speaker, I learned one thing from the hon. Claude Ryan and that is to tell the truth straight out. I can make mistakes, but I do not beat about the bush. So, between 10 and 10.30 a.m., in the absence of the people who could say otherwise, the same motion was put. This is, in essence, what was said: "Notwithstanding what has been agreed last night, unanimous consent is requested to withdraw the NDP's sub-amendment, the Official Opposition's amendment and the government's motion and to vote, next Tuesday, not on what the House has just discussed but on this new motion which was not debated."

The hon. members should read the excellent article Andrew Cohen wrote for the *Financial Post* on September 24, in which he said:

[English]

"Is combat role in the gulf best for Canada?"

[Translation]

That is what I wanted to talk about. But yet another sudden surprise prevented me from doing so.

[English]

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is an abuse of the parliamentary process. I would even say further that it is an abuse by consent.

I regret the hon. minister responsible for the House is not here. On May 24, during the abortion debate, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby tried a quick one, saying: "Let's withdraw the abortion debate." My good and esteemed friend, my good colleague and an honest man, the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, was taken by surprise. The government