

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 29, 1989

The House met at 1.50 p.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

POINT OF ORDER

HOUSE PROCEDURE

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I rise again on a point of order that is the same as a point of order I rose on some months ago. When the House adjourned for the summer, if my memory serves me correctly, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the Whole said that the House now stands adjourned until September 25 at eleven o'clock. At no time did the Speaker say to the House that pursuant to an order made earlier, we would be subject to be recalled, to remind us of that. The order of the House, for your perusal, Mr. Speaker, was made on June 27, 1989. It is very clear that we are here today pursuant to that order.

In order to avoid me rising again on the same point of order, I propose, as I proposed once before, that we look into this so that in the future, when the House adjourns, some comment is made. No other comment was made. I am not going to say whether or not what we do today is legal, but I am getting close to saying that.

We were supposed to come back here September 25. Just prior to saying goodbye until September 25, we should have been reminded that there is an order of the House requiring that we may be recalled to give Royal Assent to certain Bills. That is my interpretation, but I am sure Your Honour may wish to take that under advisement. I am in Your Honour's hands. I do not need an answer today.

It troubles me because we are called here today for a full meeting. The Speaker reads the prayers for the sole purpose of waiting here to be called to go to the Senate. I

consider this to be a full meeting of the House. My proposal would be that in the future, the House suspend its activity until we are called back to give Royal Assent to certain Bills and it is understood that the House will then be adjourned without any other business taking place until September 25 or whenever the case may be.

That is the point I wanted to bring to your attention, Your Honour, so that in the future or today, you might comment, but I do not need an answer on that today, so that we can deal with that once and for all.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, it is certainly not my intention to debate the matter with the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme). He is a far more experienced Member of this House than I am. However, I think there is a distinction to be made between suspending the business of the House and adjournment, and he made that point in his comments. I think suspending the business of the House would require the Speaker's chair to be occupied almost constantly, during the time the business of the House is suspended. If the House is adjourned, that is not necessary. So this is an option we have, and I imagine the parliamentary House leaders have thought about this, and I think that of the two, namely adjournment versus suspending the business of the House, adjournment is more convenient and more realistic than asking the House to suspend its business until the Senate has finished considering its bills. It is not my intention to criticize the Hon. Member but if the Chair has any comments on the subject, I think what is at issue is the difference between adjournment and suspending the business of the House.

[*English*]

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, when the people elected me, they elected me to take my parliamentary responsibilities very seriously, which I do, and that is why I am here, to help the House of Commons give Royal Assent to Bills we debated until one o'clock in the morning. However, we are setting a very dangerous precedent here.