Speaker's Ruling

the statue and, second, to make sure the House does not lose its valuable time.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan wishes to comment. Agreed?

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Agreed.

Mr. Jean–Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, we accept that great compromise.

Mr. Speaker: So ordered.

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[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

POLITICAL AFFILIATION

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Standstead): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is partly related to something that happened yesterday in the Legislative Committee on Bill C–79, the Parliament of Canada Act. You must have noticed the problem since you testified before the Committee.

Briefly, the list of committee members shows me as a member of the Progressive Conservative Party, although everyone knows that since May 18, I have had no further interest, either directly or indirectly, in the party and no longer wish to be associated with it.

It goes further than that, however. It seems that despite my speech in the House on May 18, 1990, my name continues to be associated with the Progressive Conservative Party in various committees, and I make this statement today, Mr. Speaker, to ensure I am no longer associated with this party, either in committee or in any other way.

Furthermore, although nearly 3 per cent of the people in Laurier—Sainte–Marie do not agree with me, 68 per cent will probably appreciate my position.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to get to the main problem which affects my privileges in this House and indeed one of the rights recognized by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and I am referring to freedom of association. I would like to read the following—for the benefit of those who might be watching at home, these glasses belong to my friend, Mr. Plamondon—and I quote: "The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law

as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society."

Everyone has the following basic freedoms: freedom of conscience and religion, of course, but also freedom of association.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I regret having to interrupt the hon. member, but there is no need to read the whole document. The point the member raised is legitimate. I can assure him that the necessary corrections can be readily made. I fully agree with his comments.

Does the hon. member have anything to add?

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege was two-fold.

You have dealt with the first part regarding my former affiliation with the Progressive Conservative Party. The second part has to do with my name being mentioned in official documents of the House and especially on air when the proceedings are broadcasted, as it is the case now.

I request, in the name of the freedom of association and pursuant to the Charter of Rights, the right of freedom of association, that fundamental right I had to be associated with my colleagues of the "Bloc Québécois". I also request that the Canadian people, as well as the people of Quebec and of my riding of Mégantic—Compton—Standstead, be informed of my new political allegeance, the political affiliation I have chosen under the Charter of Rights and in accordance with the basic principles of democracy in our society.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that precedents on this subject dating back in many instances 200 or 300 years cannot be put forward, given that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms takes precedence over any other text or privilege since coming into effect in 1981.

Your ruling will have to be based exclusively on the Charter, setting aside precedents from another era.

This alliance, as you have been officially advised, was agreed to and signed by the new members of a group called "Bloc Québécois", and must be recognized as such. In fact, what would it mean to recognize the right of association, the freedom of assocation, if you were not to recognize this group and call it by its name. You cannot simply say: You, the member for Mégantic—