

*Privilege*

I sit on the Board of Internal Economy representing my party, as does the House leader for the New Democratic Party and as do members opposite. This particular appointee is not a representative of any particular political party but of the entire House.

Third, I want to remind the chief government Whip that we are not in the United States where the common practice has been in various conventions, both Republican and Democrat, to have members who have served as speaker or in the chair given some capacity to assume responsibilities at convention time.

Fourth, the chief government Whip is trying to inform the House and thereby the Chair that the neutrality that this present Deputy Speaker exercises in carrying out her responsibilities as Deputy Speaker on the floor of the House of Commons is the same and would be the same, and thereby she would be performing the same neutrality at a Tory convention.

Twenty-five cents and a cup of coffee, come on, give us a break. That is absolutely ludicrous.

My final point is that the impartiality of the Chair is the cornerstone of our deliberations here in the House of Commons. We are elected as commoners and come here to present our views, whatever they may be from whatever political ideology.

The impartiality of the Chair is first and foremost. I suggest to the chief government Whip that the perception of the impartiality of the Chair would be severely ruptured as a result of the Deputy Speaker assuming the responsibilities as announced by the president of the Conservative Party. For the chief government Whip to indicate otherwise or that this is somehow a mean trick against the Deputy Speaker means he is being less than candid with himself, with members of this House and with the Speaker who now occupies this Chair.

**Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South):** Mr. Speaker, I have never heard of such nonsense as 25 cents and a cup of coffee. The interest of this House has nothing to do with a Progressive Conservative convention that will not be held on Parliament Hill and will not be a matter of Parliament. Members of the opposition party have nothing to do with this convention. They are not going to be invited but will probably be there because they like a good show.

They do not have to come. They are not directed to be there. What members of this Parliament do in their private capacity as a member of a political party at a political party convention has nothing to do with this House whatsoever. This is not a matter of this House.

If they want to attack the Deputy Speaker in this House and say that she is not an impartial member then they know how to make that motion, they can move that the Deputy Speaker be dismissed if they want to. They can force a vote if they want to. But this Deputy Speaker is a member of Parliament and this member of Parliament is entitled when you are in the chair, Sir, to vote in this House. She is entitled to vote in a partisan matter in this House. There is no reason why, being given that freedom, she does not have the freedom to be at a political meeting somewhere else off this Hill.

I see nothing but specious nonsense in this suggestion by the House leader of the Official Opposition. This is absolute craziness. I suggest that this point of privilege be dismissed outright as an affront to the House and as a waste of time.

**Mr. Edwards:** Mr. Speaker, this motion before us is not only an affront to this House but to private members' hour, which is almost half gone now. I will not belabour that but will simply respond to his points.

• (1130)

The hon. Deputy Speaker is of course a member of a political party. That is how virtually all of us arrive in this place. She ran as a Progressive Conservative in two elections and if she offers again she will in all likelihood run as a Progressive Conservative once more, just as my hon. friend runs as a Liberal.

I would submit that if there were anything to be criticized in the potential conduct of a Deputy Speaker it would be if that individual were managing or prominently involved in the leadership campaign of a candidate for the leadership of our party, or any other party as the case may be.

The point is that the Deputy Speaker has proposed to accept a position presiding as a parliamentary officer over a political party convention. There is no getting away from the fact that we are all involved with political parties. Being involved in a Conservative convention is somehow shameful for my friends opposite, but we do not pretend that kind of outrage and virtue. We do not suggest that being involved in a Liberal convention is