

Seating Arrangements in Chamber

one that has contested an election and that has fielded candidates for at least half the number of seats in the nation and has been successful in winning some of those seats.

It is my opinion that you have recommended correctly, and we will concur in the motion that is before us so that this matter can go before a committee. You can be assured, Mr. Speaker, that we will give you our whole-hearted support whatever the decision may be. In fairness to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, who has been speaking on behalf of the New Democratic party, on the basis of discussions we have had in the past I likewise agree that his statement is correct and that the party having the largest number of seats, provided it is a party, should be placed in the order of its numerical strength. On this basis I agree with the action you have taken and will support the motion that has been placed before the house.

[Translation]

Some hon. Members: Where is your leader?

Mr. Gilles Gregoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) will return to Ottawa around five o'clock this afternoon.

I listened closely to the remarks made earlier on this motion by the leader of the official opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker), and I wondered whether he realized that what is happening today to the former Social Credit leader might also happen to him before long. It was rather shabby of him to mention that the leader of the government had rightly termed the matter of the \$4,000 which could have affected the decision. I must point out to him that when that question was put to the house last July, the hon. member for Villeneuve voted against it on second reading, just as he did himself; which goes to prove that opposites attract one another.

The reference made concerning the hon. member for Villeneuve reminded me of the saying by Pascal to the effect that everything is evil to the evil-minded.

Mr. Speaker, we think it is our duty if possible to support the motion introduced by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), but there is one thing which I noticed in your memorandum, upon which I would like to draw your attention:

Are we facing a new party and, if so, has it been officially recognized by the house? I think it is up to the house to decide that question.

As far as we are concerned, we believe that it is not up to a political or other party to decide whether a group of members who want to form a political party have the right to do so. That is a matter for the voters to decide, if they wish their elected members to form a political party.

[Mr. Thompson.]

The voters in our ridings have elected us under the Social Credit label and so we remained. That is a well-known and officially recognized fact. We are and remain in the Social Credit, that is seventeen members who have been elected under the label of the Social Credit rally. We are therefore a group recognized by the Canadian people, by the supporters of that political party. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said, the party which is the most numerous enjoys certain privileges in the house. Therefore, I think that the Social Credit, that is the Social Credit rally should be recognized as a third opposition party in the house. As the New Democratic party numbers 17 members, we do not claim to take their place. I only want to mention one thing, Mr. Speaker, in closing my remarks, that is there are, none the less, in this house, 24 members who believe in Social Credit, and they are more numerous than those who follow socialist principles.

I hope that when the committee on privileges and elections makes its recommendations and a decision is taken, there will not be so many changes in the house.

Mr. Speaker: The house has heard the motion. Does the house agree to pass the motion?

[Text]

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the motion?

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, the following questions are to be answered today: 766, 833, 834, 863, 890, 922, 935, 947, 956, 965, 976, 977, 1024, 1028, 1035, 1046, 1049, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1087, 1095, 1102, 1104, 1105, 1118, 1121, 1122, 1123, 1130, 1135, 1139, 1140, 1142, 1143, 1144, 1146, 1147, 1148, 1152.

If starred questions 1036, 1044, 1067, may be made orders for returns, the returns can be tabled immediately.

If Your Honour would be good enough to call starred questions 705, 917, 962, 1057, 1058, 1081 and 1107, I would ask that the remaining questions stand.

Mr. Speaker: Does the house give consent to making these questions orders for returns?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Peters: I should like to raise a question of privilege in relation to question No. 1024 which is answered today. I raise this question because of the fact that during the recess I ascertained that this question should have been answered before we left. Certain information must have been available to certain