

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 16, 1993

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED COMMENTS OF MEMBER FOR ROSEMONT

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of the House some comments made by the hon. member for Rosemont in referring to members of the Speakership of the House of Commons.

According to the March 14 edition of *Beauport-Express*, a weekly newspaper, the hon. member for Rosemont said the following at a public meeting held recently in the town of Beauport, and I quote: "Charles DeBlois, one of the acting Speakers of the House, is a party to collusion to restrict our party's right to speak in Ottawa".

Although these comments were made outside the House, they nevertheless cast doubts on the integrity and impartiality of the Speakership.

All parliamentarians have a profound respect for the Speakership as an institution. Bearing that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to order the hon. member for Rosemont to withdraw these comments immediately and present his apologies to the members of the Speakership.

Mr. Speaker: I listened with some concern to what was said by the hon. member for Beauce. Since the hon. member for Rosemont is not here, this morning, in the circumstances it would perhaps be appropriate for the Speaker to meet the hon. member for Rosemont, after which the matter could be pursued in the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1010)

[*English*]

WITNESS PROTECTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-413, an act to provide for the relocation and protection of witnesses.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Wappel: Today in Canada there is no legislated program to aid informants and witnesses and their families from reprisal by criminals. What programs there are are secret, arbitrary and unaccountable to the people of Canada who pay the costs.

My bill would create a legislative framework to protect witnesses and their families, including relocation, identity change and financial assistance. It would also spell out the witnesses' responsibilities to the justice system.

This bill would aid in the prosecution of violent crime, organized crime and drug-related crime, while protecting the lives of informants, witnesses and their families all under the mandate and watchful eye of the Parliament of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Mr. Wappel moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.