

*Privilege*

could not put that on the ballot because he was elected, for many years at least, before the party designation could be put on the ballot. It was his choice as to what he wanted to be.

I recall there were independent Liberals. I recall there were independent Conservatives in the 1960s. I am sure that the changes in the Elections Act which have allowed a designation to be attached to a candidate's name have not changed the procedures or rules of this House in respect to a member's right to designate his or her party status.

I think what the government Whip is suggesting is that because there have been these changes in the Elections Act, somehow we cannot have anything independent except Independents in this House. In other words, if you are going to withdraw from a party, you must therefore become an Independent or a member of another recognized party. I do not think that is so. The member who makes the change and withdraws has his or her choice as to how he or she wishes to be called or designated in this House.

While designation as an Independent may result in the loss of certain privileges and obligations of being a member of a designated party, it does not mean that the person cannot designate himself as an independent Conservative, an independent Liberal or an independent New Democratic, and make that perfectly proper in terms of the listing in Wednesday's *Hansard*. There is nothing terribly official about it, but I think the member is entitled to make that choice. I submit that the government Whip is seeking to alter the rules under which we have operated here by reference to the changes in the Elections Act made in the seventies. I am not sure it is necessary.

If Your Honour has any doubt on the matter, I think it would be an appropriate case for a referral to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections where the matter could be considered in detail. But I submit, on the precedents that have been established in this House for many years, that it would entirely proper for the hon. member to choose his designation, insist that it be inserted in the Wednesday listing as an appendix to *Hansard*, and Your Honour could take cognizance of that designation for all purposes in this House.

I do not think that such a designation on his part would be contrary to the practices and traditions of this place. Indeed it would be fully in accordance with them, in so far as they have existed over the years. I submit they have not been changed, either by design or by accident, as a result of the amendments to the Canada Elections Act in the early 1970s whereby party designations could be placed on a ballot paper.

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Southeast):** Mr. Speaker, I wanted, at the earliest possible moment, to correct an inadvertent mistake by the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants. In his reference to a western member crossing the floor, I think he referred to Jack Murta.

Of course Jack Murta was and is an hon. gentleman who was loyal to his party over the course of his tenure here. I think he was referring to Jack Horner who crossed the floor to join the Liberals and was soundly defeated in the subsequent election.

**Mr. Speaker:** I heard the hon. member for Calgary Southeast. understood that the discussion was in respect of our former colleague, the Hon. Jack Horner.

I want to put a question to the House. Can any member advise me as to what legal impediment there is against the hon. member calling himself an independent Conservative in this House?

I have listened to the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants, the hon. member for Calgary West, the hon. member for Calgary Southeast, and the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. I will consider the matter and I will come back with a reasoned response.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Mr. Speaker, not to rebut but I got more interested in the submission of my friend, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, as he developed it. I am quite aware that if it is a question of political parties that name is in the Standing Orders, and obviously there is even more of a designation in the Elections Act. The name of parties does not appear in the Standing Orders.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank hon. members. I will consider the matter. The hon. member who has raised it has been a member of this House for many years. His father was a member of this House for many years before that. In all those years he, his father, and his family were supporters of a particular political party. Certainly the hon. member receives a certain amount of sympathy in this Chamber on both sides of the House when he raises the matter.