

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 8, 1993

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

CO-CHAIR OF PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE CONVENTION

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege of which I have given you notice.

Over the weekend, the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada announced that it would hold a leadership convention in June and that the co-chair of the convention would be the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

The problem I see for the House of Commons is that the hon. member is our Deputy Speaker and the chair of Committee of the Whole House. I suggest, given contemporary usage and given the duties the Deputy Speaker now regularly performs, the office of Deputy Speaker is not properly compatible with that of co-chair of a national political party's leadership convention. In accepting those latter duties, the hon. member has shown contempt for her responsibilities as an officer of the House.

The parliamentary authorities—

• (1110)

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I could assist the hon. member. First of all I want to thank him for giving notice of this matter. I wonder if it might not be the better course to hear this matter fully later on today at three o'clock. It might also be advisable, now that this is public, if the hon. Deputy Speaker be advised that the matter has been raised, as I am sure would be the appropriate thing to do.

I am seized with the matter now and of course I am going to hear it carefully. However, I would prefer to hear the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond more fully at three o'clock this afternoon.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I would prefer to put my intervention on the record now. We did give notice to the government House leader and I presume he has spoken with the opposition Whip, who is aware of the matter.

My remarks are relatively brief with regard to the subject matter and if the Chair needs time subsequent to my remarks to hear others, I would be more than willing to accommodate that. But I would prefer if the Chair would allow me to proceed with my intervention.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed this matter has even been brought to the floor of the House but since it has been and since the hon. opposition House leader has insisted on putting some points on the record in spite of your suggestion, Sir, I think a brief response is in order.

This would be to the effect that you, Sir, of course are the arbiter in this matter—

Mr. Speaker: Again in the interests of trying to be helpful, I suggest it might be appropriate to hear this more fully at three o'clock.

I am conscious of another matter. This is private members' hour and I wonder what courtesies the House wants to extend to the member who has a bill, as this could take some time. Perhaps the House could think about that as well. I am in the hands of the House, but my own feeling is that this ought to be pursued this afternoon rather than now.

Mr. Edwards: Of course I defer to your guidance, Sir. I respect private members' hour and so I will only take a few seconds.

Since the hon. opposition House leader had an opportunity to put his points on the record, I simply want to respond and ask him to reflect on this point before the ensuing discussion later on. The Deputy Speaker, by accepting such a position with a leadership convention, demonstrates her neutrality in that particular race and it