

Independents. If we want to make that decision, let the hon. House leader (Mr. Baker) make the motion. I am bothered with the fact that it may happen to me some day.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Peters: We were here when there were 208 Tories and only eight members of the CCF. We had some difficulty in establishing our position, not as the opposition, but as the Official Opposition. The Liberals of that day knew that the government would defeat itself and they very smartly just waited. We in the CCF were not that smart and we were too small a group to have that luxury, so we fought very hard for the position as a political party and a role in the opposition. That was not an unfortunate role and we now have 31 members—

● (1800)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Where are they?

Mr. Peters: I must have been thinking of some of the byelections that are coming along.

I sincerely believe that the members of this House do not want to make a decision that will deprive a number of members of the opportunity and rights of being a political party under whose banner they campaigned and were elected.

We, as members of this House, may decide who sits on a committee. We may make that decision from time to time, and the circumstances may vary. It may be that we do not want a member of the Social Credit party to respond or reply to motions. If that is the case, let us say so.

Ever since that list was delivered to you, Mr. Speaker, by all political parties, it has been of concern to me, because it has elevated political parties and members thereof to positions to which they were not elected. I think we have arrived at a stage where there are political parties when it suits the majority, and individuals when it does not suit that majority. I suggest we would be very unfair to take from the Social Credit members that right to belong to a political party, under whose banner they were elected as members, by the process of a majority without the benefit of a motion and without the benefit of any real discussion or debate. I think we should not do that under the guise of having made a decision on another matter.

I have sometimes made statements in speeches that I was happy afterward to have rejected. Just because one makes

statements during an argument does not necessarily make those statements right. I suggest with all due respect that the decision made yesterday was a decision regarding membership of a Social Credit member on the striking committee, and that is all. That decision was not taken in respect of a party, it was taken in respect of an individual.

The Address—Mr. Broadbent

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Roy) has left a question of privilege with me and has asked that I consider it overnight. I would simply reiterate what I have said. I will consider his question of privilege carefully overnight. I have already decided on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert).

My difficulty lies in the fact that a decision has been taken by the House. It seems to me that the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) would have me brush aside the validity of the House and come to some other conclusion in the face of the clear position I quoted this afternoon. That decision was more than a simple reflection of the matter involved in the motion concerning the membership of the committee. That was a decision clearly taken by the House and I cannot ignore its very clear content.

Let me also say this. Indeed, the House has ways of dealing with these situations. Let me leave an example. Had the hon. member for Beauce been the only member standing 30 minutes ago, he would have been recognized and it would not have been clear whether he was being recognized as a party leader or not. These are devices the House knows well, and can use.

The House, by consent, can do a number of things to oblige or accommodate members at different times. If the House wishes to do something, it has a perfect right within its power to do so. However, I am a servant of the House and the House made a clear decision yesterday. In my opinion I no longer have any choice in the matter. The House may have another choice and may do some other things, but, in the absence of any clear direction by the House on the subject, I have to be bound by yesterday's decision, which, in my opinion, stands directly between me and the precedents the hon. member cited this afternoon.

However, I did say I will give the member's question of privilege consideration overnight and I will do so.

It being six o'clock, this House stands adjourned until eleven o'clock tomorrow morning.

At 6.04 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.