

affiliation is entirely in the member's hands, in the hands of the electors?

Perhaps we can turn our attention east to India. Its system is such that you run under a political affiliation and when, for one reason or another, you tire of that political affiliation and are not willing to support the majority consensus that is reached, then your seat is declared vacant and you have the right to run as an Independent or an independent Conservative, or whatever you will, and to seek re-election.

Perhaps this Parliament would be well served if people were to take that step and to seek their voters' approval under a different kind of label. I think none of us in this Chamber who believe in democracy would have any difficulty with that. But, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that to invent a political affiliation which does not exist under the Canada Elections Act and to request the Parliament of Canada to approve the designation of that political affiliation in its written records, when it does not exist as a label one can use in running for election in this country, would be a serious mistake. It could lead to all kinds of abuses over time where people deliberately run under one affiliation with the intention of emerging at a later time under a different one.

• (1520)

There are those of us in western Canada who have faced that reality, going back to the late 1970s. Some of those who presently form the core of the Reform Party sought nomination in the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. There was one in my riding back in 1977 who sought the nomination to represent the Conservative Party with the intention of winning election as a Progressive Conservative and emerging in this Chamber as a member of another political group, devoted to western separatism.

That is not very democratic. It is not something that this House should allow. If people get elected under a banner, that is one thing. If they no longer like the banner under which they got elected and they can join another party in the Chamber that was legitimately elected, then that is another thing. But if neither of those two situations exist for the member, then I think

Privilege

we have no choice but to list them in the back of our book as an Independent.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I listened with care to the remarks of the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants and also to the government Whip's intervention.

First of all, I would like to correct what I believe to be an error in the first hon. member's submission to the House concerning the fact that parties do not appear in the standing orders. I draw his attention to Standing Order 33, wherein parties are specifically mentioned. I am sure I could find others had I the time to go right through the order book.

Parties are mentioned in Standing Order 33 and they are referred to as existing in the House of Commons, and so parties do crop up in there. There are many references to parties in the Canada Elections Act, as I am sure he knows. I did not want him to create the wrong impression that parties were not in fact part of our electoral structure. There has been a significant change in the electoral structure since the 1960s, the time period of which he was speaking.

I recognize that members are free to run with a party label now in an election and that the label can be put on the ballot, but it is up to the candidate who is seeking election to choose whether he or she wishes to have a party designation attached to his or her name.

The hon. member should remember that. In other words, we are not compelled by the Elections Act to run as representatives of a party or with a party label attached. We have the option of refusing and just leaving no affiliation following the name on the ballot.

The hon. member in choosing his own designation here as a member of this House is free to make the choice that he suggests he is entitled to make, notwithstanding what the government Whip says.

I well recall the incident he referred to with Mr. Churchill, the former member for Winnipeg South Centre. I also recall the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River, Mr. Benidickson, who for many years was a Lib-Lab member of Parliament. He would not take a straight Liberal appellation, although he sat with the Liberals in the House. He insisted on Liberal-Labour appearing as his party affiliation in the Wednesday editions of *Hansard*. He ran as such, but of course he