

*Speaker's Ruling*

Mr. Speaker, you have said many times that the Speaker is the servant of the House, not its leader. You yourself, Mr. Speaker, are a servant of the House and your colleagues as well, including the hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans. I think he is strictly impartial in the performance of his duties and, as I see it, this criticism is entirely unfair. He is no one's *instrument*. He is, as you are, Mr. Speaker, a servant of this House, and that is as it should be.

**Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce):** Mr. Speaker, after listening to the hon. member for Rosemont going on at length about how he was misinterpreted or quoted out of context I still believe the journalists at the *Beauport-Express* in Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans accurately reported what was said that evening.

• (1015)

There was talk of collusion. It was said that the rights of Bloc Quebecois members were violated in this House. I think the hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans is doing a magnificent job in this House as one of its Deputy Chairmen. With unruffled calm and an abiding concern for fairness and justice he has always given everyone his due here in the House.

Since the hon. member for Rosemont is apparently unwilling to admit that he went too far—although it would have been so easy for him to do so this morning—I wish to move, seconded by the hon. member for Terrebonne:

That the matter of the comments made by Mr. Tremblay, member for Rosemont, with regard to Mr. DeBlois, member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans and Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole, as reported in the March 14, 1993 edition of the newspaper *Beauport-Express*, be referred to the Standing Committee on House Management.

I move this motion, Mr. Speaker, subject to the Chair's ruling.

## SPEAKER'S RULING

**Mr. Speaker:** This is, of course, a rather difficult situation, not only for the Speaker and the hon. member, but also for the House.

I listened carefully to what was said by the hon. member for Rosemont. He may have given some explanation of the circumstances in which he made the

comments that were quoted in the newspaper in question.

However, I have some difficulty with the facts, because clearly if we consider only what was quoted in the newspaper those words are in my opinion unacceptable to this House. If we consider the words that were reported we clearly have a *prima facie* case that affects the dignity of this House and our colleague, because our colleague is an officer of this House. As the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell said earlier, like the Speaker he is an officer of this House and an attack against the integrity of a person in that position is an attack against this House.

As I said before, I listened to the comments of the hon. member for Rosemont, and I assume the crux of the problem is the position of the Bloc in this House. I realize that there have been ongoing complaints by some members of the Bloc Quebecois about its status as a party in this House.

• (1020)

However, all members, and the public as well, must realize the decision on the status of members of the Bloc Quebecois was not made by the Speaker or by our colleague.

If the hon. member for Rosemont would accept this distinction and perhaps be willing to withdraw this morning the comments he made with reference to the Speaker—and as the Speaker of this House I am his Speaker as well—we would accept that.

However, in the circumstances, I think that for the sake of relations between Bloc Quebecois members and the other members of this House it would be entirely appropriate to withdraw altogether the comments reported in the newspaper.

If there is a withdrawal, it would be preferable to make it here. I therefore suggest that the hon. member for Rosemont consider the Chair's comments and perhaps, on reflection, he might wish to withdraw entirely the comments that were quoted in the newspaper.

**M. Tremblay (Rosemont):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether we have a language problem, but I think I made it quite clear that I understood the Speaker did not, and cannot, for that matter, make the rules that denied the Bloc Quebecois recognition as a political party. I made that quite clear.