

is embedded into your tissue like a tattoo". These things are not tattoos, Mr. Speaker.

But let me come to the conclusion because I do not want to overtake the system by saying there is no official status for parties in this House. The political system is on the basis of individuals. You are elected as an individual. I know there is a lot of pressure. We could get computerized. We could all be ciphers in the old computer game, and forget even the names. I understand the attraction of members to a party and leaders, but the fact is we still run as the hon. member. I do not want to name my friends over there, but when they put their name on the ballot, not the party, it is because of the Elections Act of 1970 and accounting purposes that we have to put the affiliation. That is just an incidental fact and it should not be the dominant fact.

Our political system is for individuals, Mr. Speaker. Our parliamentary system is not for a block of government members of 170 or whatever. It is for 295 members. Why do we have an index in the back of the book?

• (1510)

I conclude with what I think is the best message of all, something which some members may remember. I do. It was during the financial crisis in the Bob Stanfield era when Mr. Pearson over an Easter break was in Bermuda and got caught in an ambush on a finance bill. There were many of us here in a caucus who thought the government had come to a halt. We thought since the government of the day had been defeated on a tax bill, in effect the government stopped, there was a loss of confidence and Parliament would not even open.

This was years before we started thinking of ringing the bells. I was in the Conservative caucus then and I tell you, Mr. Speaker, there were vibrant discussions in caucus. That day, we met in Room 112-N at least once, if not after in the Railway Committee Room, but usually down there because the thing was so topical.

I can remember Gordon Churchill, Jack Horner and others who took a certain stand on one side and Mike Starr who as the House leader was trying to decide whether we would even come into the House.

Our point was that a tax bill was a vote of confidence and was dead. In actual fact, Mr. Stanfield then or later admitted that he got a call from the governor of the bank and was told if we did not meet, there would be a run on

the dollar because it was a minority Parliament. A run on the dollar would have been disastrous for Canada.

Therefore, with a sense of public duty, Mr. Stanfield had to take the caucus into the House and have a debate on the question of privilege that the House did not really exist. That debate lasted two days, but the House got going.

That is the time I realized the House really could be a charade. After the leading speeches of Mr. Stanfield, Mr. Pearson and Mr. Lewis of the NDP, the three main speeches on the most important constitutional question that had hit us for many a year, the whole debate was carried out in the halls. After two days of that, Mr. Pearson won the day because the public said: "Of course, this House has to sit and debate things."

Mr. Churchill, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, said, and I will conclude with this. I want to read the whole thing, because this is the state Parliament has come to.

When the statesman Mr. Churchill stood and gave a little statement on his position, there was not a person who would have dared rise and say: "Mr. Churchill, you are not allowed to call yourself that, or do what you think is right."

This is what he said at that time in the House of Commons on February 27, 1968, at page 7019, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege to announce that it is my intention to sit in the house as an independent Conservative.

That, of course, is what I want to do here.

I am taking this step after careful—

Ms. Coppins: There is no such thing as an independent Conservative.

Mr. Nowlan: What are you trying to say here? She sounds the same from here as she sounded from over there. It is disconcerting on either side.

I continue:

I am taking this step—

I must say this is the type of statement that I should have said rather than abuse the Chair the other day.

I am taking this step after careful and long consideration, and with deep regret. The issue before the house is so fundamental to our parliamentary system and so dangerous to our freedom that I cannot justify to my conscience to surrender now of part of our freedom in the hope that it may be regained at some uncertain time in the future. That runs counter to my experience of life and to my understanding of mankind's long and painful struggle for freedom. The decision of the Progressive Conservative party to capitulate at this time is so contrary