

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 23, 1993

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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[*Translation*]

### PRIVILEGE

#### ALLEGED COMMENTS OF MEMBER FOR ROSEMONT

**Mr. Speaker:** Last week, we heard the hon. member for Beauce comment on a newspaper article about the Acting Speaker. After a number of discussions, I think it may be appropriate to hear what the hon. member for Rosemont has to say.

**Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Beauce quoted a sentence that was reported in a newspaper obviously out of context.

What people should realize is that we had a big meeting of militant members of the Bloc Québécois in the riding of Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, attended by nearly 1,500 people. These people know their member very well, especially since they were largely responsible for electing him in 1984 and 1988. They remember his doubts when he was about to join the Bloc Québécois when he was in his riding in 1990 and 1991, and then went back to the Conservatives in Ottawa.

• (1010)

What I said in addition to what was reported in the press is that by accepting his appointment as one of the Deputy Chairmen of the House, the hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans had put himself in a position where he had to apply rules that did not recognize the Bloc Québécois, with the approval of the traditional political parties here in this House. Of course I realize, and that is why I used the word *instrument*, that the Speaker cannot overrule a decision by members and party leaders who applied the letter rather than the intent of the Standing Orders, because everyone knows

perfectly well there are precedents that would amply justify recognizing the Bloc Québécois as a political party.

It is quite simple. The hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans had a choice. He made his choice and, as a result of that decision, he is now in a position to apply rules set by all or by almost all political parties in this House, by what we call the traditional parties.

I used the word collusion. Perhaps I should have said coalition, since collusion connotes an element of secrecy. I may add that the committee's meetings were secret and that we were never able to explain our position. We were never able to discuss it. The Standing Orders were applied. In fact they were used as an excuse and there was never an open debate. I think it would be more accurate to refer to a coalition of the traditional parties in the House instead of collusion.

The crux of the matter remains the same, and the people of Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans realize that. The fact is that for the past two years we have had a situation where many members told their constituents they were very close to the Bloc Québécois, and now when conventions are being held to elect candidates for the next election people should know where they stand. I think the residents of Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans will know exactly where they stand in the next election.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I may comment briefly on this point of order. Personally, and I am sure I also speak for most if not all parliamentarians in this House, I think that when presiding over the proceedings of this House the hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans is absolutely fair and impartial. If people say the hon. member takes political sides in his own riding, well I certainly hope so. After all, he was elected as a member of a political party. But to say that his role in the Chair makes him party to some kind of collusion or coalition is unfair because it reflects on the Speakership as a whole.