

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Monday, September 30, 1963

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

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#### STATEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER RESPECTING SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

**Mr. Speaker:** May I take this first opportunity to welcome all hon. members back to the house to what I am sure will be a very energetic, strenuous and without doubt profitable session for the public of Canada.

[Translation]

It gives me pleasure to find us all together again, ready to get back to work.

I am quite convinced that the months to come will be of benefit to all our fellow-Canadians thanks to the knowledge and intelligence of all those around me, both on my right and on my left.

Now I have a statement to make, and I thought of expressing myself both in English and in French. On the other hand, it might be better if the French text were distributed immediately so that hon. members who wish to do so can refer to it while I read the English.

[Text]

Before calling the orders of the day I would crave the indulgence of hon. members in order to permit me to make a statement on a situation which has developed since the adjournment of the house on August 2. The problem with which the house is faced is a new one. May I be allowed to refer, in a chronological order, to certain correspondence by which I was apprised of the facts.

On September 9, 1963, the hon. member for Lapointe wrote me a letter to the effect that his party had chosen a new leader and claiming certain rights and privileges.

On September 13, 1963, the hon. member for Red Deer wrote me a letter to the effect "that the separation of Mr. Real Caouette and his followers from the party poses several problems".

On September 16 the hon. member for Villeneuve wrote me a letter reading in part as follows:

[Translation]

Since September 1, our movement has become a national group under the name of Ralliement Creditistes.

[Text]

On September 18 the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre wrote me a letter reading in part:

In view of recent developments it seems quite clear that the New Democratic party, with its 17 members, is now the third largest group in the House of Commons.

Later on in the letter he adds:

Since we are now the largest of the smaller parties we will expect to be seated immediately next to the official opposition.

The events which have taken place and the correspondence in relation thereto, which I am prepared to lay on the table if the house so desires, have given rise to a number of questions. Among them is first the recognition of a new party and of its leader; second, the seating arrangements in the chamber; then the question of the allowance to "the leader of a party that has a recognized membership of 12 or more persons in the House of Commons"; and following that the allocation of rooms, personnel, and other matters. I do not think it is necessary to deal with those problems at the moment; it is sufficient to mention them.

"Party" as defined by Burke in the classical passage on the subject, "Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontent" is a body of men united for promoting the national interest on some particular principle in which they are all agreed.

Have we a new party according to this definition and, if so, has this party been recognized by the house? To my mind this is a question for the house to decide.

The question of third parties in itself is not a new one. After the last election, apart from the Liberal and Conservative parties, as all hon. members know, there were recognized the Social Credit party and the New Democratic party.

Third parties have existed continually in the house practically since 1921. In 1921 there were 117 Liberals, 50 Conservatives, 66 Progressives and 2 other members, independent and labour. This third party situation has continued throughout the years, that is after the elections of 1925, 1926, 1930, 1935, 1940, 1945, 1949, 1953, 1957, 1958, 1962 and 1963.

If the house is used to third parties, that is to having a third and fourth party in the house, it will be admitted that it creates quite a new situation to have a third party divide