

do so, that we had to support inconveniences during the question period, no charge has been laid, no full enquiry has been requested and, finally, the House had no authority to allow or order the Crown to hold one. The Crown may sometimes take it upon itself not to order an inquiry, that becomes a ministerial decision. I cannot see how, Mr. Speaker, while this is not a question of privilege—since the member accused himself—the House could now have the right which it did not have in the case of ministers.

At that time, the Progressive Conservatives merely tarnished reputations, made hints. As I see it, the Speaker could not then, of his own free will, compel the Progressive Conservatives to lay charges. The Chair always considered the questions put at that time by members as consistent with the Standing Orders. That is what the hon. member for Témiscamingue did. But instead of tarnishing the reputation of others, he committed himself. For this reason I do not see how the Progressive Conservatives could blame the leader of the Social Credit Party of Canada. Quite the opposite, they should show the same courage and withdraw their insinuations against Liberal ministers, apologize to this House and to the people of Canada for the time that was lost by the House through their own fault, because they, or at least some of them did indeed receive monies, as is evidenced in *Hansard*. Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, our proceedings are a farce.

In closing, I would repeat my first argument, that the Chair, assuming it accepted the motion by the hon. member for Joliette, would in effect recognize that a notice has been served orally by the House on a matter that was never submitted to it, and it would thereby make a precedent. In those circumstances and assuming the Speaker accepted that, I would then intend, using the same methods used by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), to verbally inform you that I shall introduce a motion to the effect that all members who might have received monies from these unions be called to give evidence.

So, Mr. Speaker, such a precedent would open a never ending process of mud throwing. I cannot see what pleasure the Progressive Conservatives would derive from that. As far as the member for Témiscamingue is concerned, he has a reputation of an honest citizen across the country, and I have no intention of letting it be tarnished if members will absolutely make accusations, when he accused himself.

[English]

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the statements made by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin), for whose capacity for flexibility I have the greatest admiration, there is this comparison between the charges alleged by the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) and statements that members of this party have made with respect to the operations of the SIU. In both cases we are seeking, have sought and will continue to seek, a public inquiry not only into the charges made by the hon. member for Joliette, but to the extent it has been compared with the other situation we seek to procure from a reluctant and stubborn government a full inquiry into the other matter as well. I do not think the hon. member can make that kind of comparison.

Privilege—Mr. La Salle

In so far as concerns the allegation made about notice given to Your Honour, Your Honour will be aware that yesterday, pursuant to what was discussed in the House on Friday, the Chair was given notice of the intent to deal with this matter. As I rose to speak I saw that the hon. member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Caouette) was not in the House and realized, as Your Honour quite properly said, that we should wait until today to give him an opportunity to be here. I am glad the hon. member for Lotbinière has answered for him. He did indicate to me that he was prepared to answer for the hon. member, and said he would even be willing to suffer any penalty that might be levied against the hon. member for Témiscamingue.

These are very serious accusations and I think this question of privilege should be discussed. I admit that all too often in this House there are cases of abuse in respect of questions of privilege. I am frank to admit that I have witnessed a number of these incidents. I am sure Your Honour, sitting where you now do, has had occasion in the last few months to observe from that elevated position much more than you did when sitting at our level. Perhaps there have been more instances of abuse of alleged privileges than was the case in the past.

Years ago, when the issue of privilege first arose, the circumstances were quite different from those that obtain today. Today, the press gallery, its members and members of the radio and television media are the window through which the world looks in on the workings, deliberations and statements of this House. I think it is imperative—I say this as the foundation of my argument—that people outside this chamber be entitled to expect that what is said in this House is, in fact, reasonably and impartially reported.

It may well be that there are issues of bias and prejudice, and members of this House may feel they are not being reported as adequately or as often as they would like. But if it becomes evident that what is being reported as having been said in this House by members is a distortion, an exaggeration or an improper interpretation because members are paying for the privilege, then obviously the public, whom members of the press gallery and ourselves serve, will become more cynical than they have been in the past in respect of what are the true statements emanating from this House. That is why I and members of my party attach a very considerable degree of importance to what is said here.

I am not going to retrace the ground covered by the hon. member for Joliette. His statements are on the record and I am sure Your Honour has considered them. However, there are a few arguments I would like to make, as we are not without precedent as to what should and what should not constitute a privilege. I quote from an article appearing in *The Parliamentarian* of July, 1973, written by a distinguished member of the table of this House. It is said at page 150 of this book:

For instance, scandalous or libellous reflections on the proceedings of the House and upon members individually have been considered as breaches of privilege.

In addition, a very excellent document on parliamentary privilege was prepared by the research branch of the Library of Parliament, dated May 28, 1969, which presents good study of this issue. At page 3 we find the following: