

Privilege

may not feel that they have to make any further observations. The hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair.

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, I just have a fact to bring to the discussion and an observation.

I have never been in a situation of this sort in all my life. It is a wonderful demonstration of how evil can be the perpetuation of rumour, guilt by association, and the invention of facts and the exaggeration of facts in a way that brings this kind of an accusation to the fore. However subtly people, who are otherwise rationale sensible people, begin to behave as if those facts that are not facts were true. That is what has happened here to a very large degree.

Beyond that, I just wanted to point this out because it might be inferred that the Canadian Federation of Students was involved in the demonstration. I would just like to say that I called them this morning to ascertain whether they even knew about the demonstration and, as far as I was able to ascertain, no one at the offices of the Canadian Federation of Students, neither their elected officers nor their full-time staff, knew anything about it.

We have made every effort possible, I should tell you, Sir, to find out who was responsible and we have not really ascertained whom that might be. I just want to make it clear that the Canadian Federation of Students, insofar as we know, had nothing to do with it whatever.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that we all make mistakes around here. I think the member for Peace River has made a mistake. I think that everything that has happened here since he made the charge demonstrates adequately that he made that mistake.

I do not think that he or the member for Windsor—St. Clair, or the House, should be dragged any further through this process. What is needed is for the member for Peace River to get up, in light of the counterfactuals which have been presented and in light of the denial which has been made by the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair, and withdraw the charge.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I regret I was not here for the entire discussion, having another important engagement, but I did want to say that I regret the parts of the discussion I have heard to imply that the hon. member for Peace River is

showing some sort of prejudices or biases, or in some way is being unfair.

We have all seen, read, and heard, particularly in recent months, the contempt with which politicians in our institutions are being held around the country. A lot of it comes to us because of what happens in this institution. I guess what hurts more than anything else about yesterday's incident is that somehow that kind of behaviour, to those students at least, was legitimized as a legitimate expression of a political dissent in this country. It shows that they at least held this institution in such disrespect that that kind of behaviour was felt to be legitimate.

Against that background, the information that the member for Peace River adduced to the House today about the poster hanging up for a long time and indicating the NDP critic would be raising the question. The other evidence, circumstantial—

An hon. member: Yes. Unchecked.

Mr. Andre: Just a minute—suggesting that in fact they had, at the very least, used their intimate knowledge of what the New Democratic Party was planning and the offices and facilities—

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Andre: —to plan and bring about the event that occurred. The poster indicated they knew the NDP critic would be raising the issue, the fact that the students had obtained the passes. All I am saying is that at the very least, those students used their knowledge of the NDP's intent and their tickets to organize this event. Mr. Speaker, I cannot see how that can be denied.

I hear hon. members talking about the concern that their reputation has been besmirched as a result of these facts being adduced to the House. If that is the concern, if they wanted this matter looked into so any besmirchment could be cleared up by examination in committee, I would certainly facilitate and participate in any such motion. But, as it is, I would ask fair-minded members opposite to consider the facts that were in the hands of the member for Peace River and what happened yesterday and, rather than getting into a rage, look at the facts and realize that the hon. member for Peace River did nothing more than to legitimately raise what happened in the hope that we could all agree that whatever the