

Point of Order

Unfortunately it cannot be taken off the record. For that I am truly sorry and I wish to extend my sincere apology.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair and indeed all members of our caucus were impugned today by the government members trying to intimate that we were associated with the demonstration in the gallery. As leader of party, I want to say that we would—

Mr. Siddon: It wouldn't happen by accident.

Ms. McLaughlin: The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development now says it would not happen by accident. I want to say to the minister and to all members on the other side that I dissociate myself, but I should not have to say that as members of Parliament we do not condone that kind of demonstration. We have never condoned that kind of demonstration, and we should not have to say we dissociate ourselves. It should be assumed that members of Parliament do not appreciate that kind of behaviour from the gallery.

I appreciate your comments, Mr. Speaker, and the comments of the previous speaker about withdrawing his comments; but I would ask the Deputy Prime Minister who has left, or someone speaking on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister, to offer to withdraw the remarks of all of the government members on the other side.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, part of our role in this Chamber and as officers of this House, as Whips, is to try to maintain decorum in the House.

I have been rising in this Chamber since I became aware of a situation last week about statements made by the House leader of the New Democratic Party about members of the government caucus. Those comments are untrue and they are known to be untrue, and they have not been apologized for. There has not been an adequate opportunity for me to argue the question of privilege, and that is partly what has gone wrong in this House. It began on October 11 on a very serious issue with—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member may be referring to an argument which he commenced by way of a question of

privilege. That argument will of course be heard as soon as the hon. member for Kamloops returns.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. The cards that were thrown on the floor of the House were all signed. Perhaps the government could answer each one and tell these people this is not the right way to communicate with Canadians.

[*English*]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understand how easy it is for members to say things that they might think is a statement in levity that can nonetheless have the effect of departing from the practices of this House.

My friend, the hon. member for York South—Weston, in response to the apology that was just uttered by my colleague from Athabasca, said that he did not believe that statement. It may be that the statement was uttered tongue in cheek, as is suggested. That may be the case.

I have been in the House, Mr. Speaker, for 16 years—

An hon. member: Eighteen years.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Eighteen years. I have been travelling a lot. I know, Sir, that the standards of this House when they decline, decline gradually. People do not intend that they decline but they decline nonetheless.

I think the hon. member for York South—Weston is a serious parliamentarian who would want the standards of this House to be respected. I would consequently ask him, one colleague to another, if he would stand in his place and withdraw those remarks.

• (1510)

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I just wish to indicate that I fully subscribe to the standards as advocated by the member who just spoke.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point as the hon. member for Yukon rose on.

I have not yet heard from the government side an indication of whether it felt it was appropriate for not