

*Privilege*

at—Arms whether or not we were informed. They did not check before they made that very serious accusation in the House.

The parliamentary secretary made a very serious charge, as I have indicated. He made a very serious mistake, as my colleague, the member for Winnipeg—Transcona said. I would expect that we have a full withdrawal of that charge, or that member, if he finds that those charges are false and those charges are not correct because he did not check before he got up in the House of Commons and made those charges, that will resign as a member of the House.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, he made a very serious charge against a member of the House and he must be willing to accept the consequences.

In further evidence against the charges made on the basis of hearsay and rumour, I had the whip's office check. Yesterday, as we always do, we submitted our list of questions which we had planned on asking to the Canadian Press and the CBC. It is a courtesy that parties extend, as all senior members of the House should be aware.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that on that list submitted to those two senior news bureaus we did not have a question by the member for Windsor—St. Clair, thus vindicating everything he has said.

We have no control of what might be on a poster. We have no control what somebody might say outside in the lobby. But we do know the questions that we intended to ask in the House.

We have got up and we have defended our actions. I would say that the government took a very despicable route today. It charged a member. It did not do its research. It did not do its homework, and it will have to pay in the House for those charges.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte):** Mr. Speaker, I realize, as do all members, that this is a very important subject for the House to consider. Like all members, we are trying to understand the frustration and how strong people feel about certain issues, but none of us appreciate those feelings being demonstrated or communicated by way of throwing things down into

the Chamber. It is harmless one day; another day it may be quite serious. None of us can subscribe to that kind of activity.

I listened, not in the Chamber but to my television, to the case put forward by the parliamentary secretary to the House leader. I listened to the facts, as the parliamentary secretary described them, to substantiate his case. I have to say that I did not hear, personally, as a member, facts. I heard a pretty good circumstantial case, if one were trying to make a case circumstantially.

Members being objective could hardly describe what we heard. If one wanted to assign guilt, if one wanted to presume guilt, and if one were trying to make the case, then the presentation of the member, circumstantially, would support the theory. I submit we did not hear facts.

I know on many occasions in the House—and it is primary and essential to the functioning of this place to accept the word of an hon. member—members frequently are called upon to do that. Sometimes there is great emotion running through the House when we are called upon to do that, but we have to do it. When a member is directly asked a question, that member directly answers the question. Unless there are hard facts—not a circumstantial case, not a suggestion of facts, but unless there are hard facts—we in this place always accept the word of an hon. member. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, if we depart from that we will be in very great difficulty in this place.

I suggest, as well, to you, Mr. Speaker, because you have a decision to make, that in the absence of hard facts to even refer the matter to the House for a vote, assuming one can anticipate how that vote may go, there is a presumption of guilt, whatever the outcome of the exercise. I think Parliament would be better served, and our time would be better served if we got back to the matter at hand as quickly as possible.

• (1540)

**Mr. Speaker:** I am reluctant to extend the debate very much further. There has been some suggestion that, serious as this matter is, I will have of course to consider it. There is another very serious matter which the House has been asked to debate today.

I am prepared to hear the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair. After I have heard him, his colleagues may or