

ence between "acting illegally", "acting improperly", and "indulging in wrongdoing".

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has used semantics to evade the issue. It is not what you call it, whether an illegal act, a wrongdoing or an impropriety that identifies what happened. I can think of many improprieties that are far more serious than certain illegalities. I suggest that what Your Honour has to look at is the quality of the act. In our view, the quality of the acts of certain cabinet ministers, and the quality of the act of the Prime Minister in covering up this whole thing for the last two weeks, is bad—and, in my view, calling that a wrongdoing or an impropriety makes it just as bad, if not worse, than if I were to call it an illegal act. So I suggest to Your Honour that in considering this case you will have to review your own pronouncements about this being a place of debate, and you will also have to do some very careful analysis of semantics as to the meaning of these various words.

My hon. friend from Grenville-Carleton has done the job very well, but there is just one further thing I should like to say. It is a bit annoying, speaking of the double standards there are around here—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):**—that almost every time some criticism or accusation comes from this side of the House we have these fellows on the other side jumping up and saying, "Lay a charge. Put your seat on the line".

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** And the backbenchers applaud, as they are doing now. But when accusations come from the other side, we do not hear the cry, "Lay a charge". The Prime Minister, by innuendo, has been downgrading Mr. Justice Mackay through the whole of this affair, but he has laid no charge.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The problem itself is complicated enough without seeking other fields to complicate it further. I think it would be better if we stuck to the question of whether or not a question of privilege exists regarding the language of the hon. member for York-Simcoe.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I agree with you, Mr. Speaker, but I remind you that the closing words of the President of the Privy Council were a demand that the hon. member for York-Simcoe lay a charge and put his seat on the line. I suggest that if the opposition is being told that it must lay a charge, the standard should apply both ways. Today the hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané) made accusations against Mr. Justice Mackay. But did he lay a charge? The President of the Privy Council likes to attack me all over the place, but he never lays a charge.

*Privilege—Mr. Sharp*

I suggest that the basic procedural issue is whether or not the hon. member for York-Simcoe went beyond the bounds of propriety in his words last night, and that is for you to decide. I suggest the issue is not one for the President of the Privy Council to becloud and fudge by this old cry that members of the opposition, every time they make an accusation, must lay a charge. It is a form of evasion; we have had enough of it.

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, my own privileges are being affected by the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens). He referred to ministers, without naming my name. I was not in the House and this is the first occasion I have had to ask him to make a charge or withdraw and apologize. The hon. member has said that some ministers acted illegally. When this incident was first printed in the newspaper, I sent a letter to the judge who made the accusation, and within 48 hours he withdrew his charge and apologized. The week after that, the paper that printed the story withdrew its charges and apologized to the hon. member for Saint-Maurice officially on the front page of the paper. I think the hon. member is making a very serious accusation and he should at least apply the standard used by the two people I mentioned earlier who withdrew their charges in my case.

In addition to that, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) the other day, as the legal adviser to the Crown, stated there was absolutely no illegality in the actions of the three ministers mentioned. Since my personal privileges are affected, I ask the hon. member to withdraw his charge or to face the consequences of his actions and put his seat on the line.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I have been brought into the debate by both members opposite. Perhaps in one case it was by way of a red herring, but in the other case it may have been more important. In the first case, the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) referred to the land grab during the regime of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker). I know Your Honour would be impatient if we returned to that one, but it was brought in as a precedent. I just want to remind the House of your judgment, sir, in that matter. It was that I did not allege anything wrong or any illegal wrongdoing or impropriety. Your judgment was to the effect that I said this had been done to the benefit of the institutions of this country and that I had personally said the facts were known to the House: they are that around 1958 these acres which were in the NCC were suddenly used for the purpose of the prime minister. Those were the facts on that. I say this is probably a red herring.

● (1230)

On the other point, the semantics about wrongdoing, I want to make it quite clear that I did use the word advisedly. If hon. members remember my statement and the questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark), they will note I used it as a general and—and I specify—a vague term because I meant to cover, and I say this quite clearly, illegalities and improprieties. I indicated that I used this term, but I asked the House what should follow from each of these courses. I said the wrongdoing, which is the illegality, is not alleged by anybody. As a matter of