

*Privilege*

is time for us all to turn over a new leaf and finally respect this House.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take up too much of the time of the House, but I do believe that what we are discussing this morning is extremely important.

What the previous speaker said truly astonished me, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to say very briefly that the incident we are discussing this morning is not just a matter of decorum. During debate, a member will occasionally use certain terms, but this debate is about the authority of this House, the authority of the Chair and the Mace. I think this is a very important matter. If we want to continue to express ourselves freely, and if we want the Chair to make decisions, we must respect the authority vested in the Mace and the Chair in this House.

Mr. Speaker, there is another equally important question we discussed not long ago, which we will have an opportunity to discuss in the days to come and I am referring to the question of decorum. In this case, however, I think we should concentrate on the issue of authority as represented by the Mace, and on what the Chair in the House represents, to guide us in future debate.

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, I was here in the House when the incident occurred not far from my seat. I think it is most regrettable, and I agree with those members who believe that we cannot go on as if nothing had happened. The Speaker of the House had decided to adjourn the House. He was leaving, while the Sergeant at Arms carried the Mace, and the hon. member actually attacked the Mace, the symbol of order in this House.

Perhaps I may say that last night's incident, unfortunate though it was, is no reason to forgive previous incidents.

[*English*]

We are not forgiving in this House of other members who may have abused the privileges of this House either by word or by act or by gesture.

I would like to tell the member from Chambly that I agree with him that none of us are pure and white, but I do not forget and I do not think he does either that other members at one time in this House did similar things. We do not forget but we do not forgive either.

Yesterday was, in my opinion and to my way of thinking, a rather hard attack on basic order of this House. It was a charge on the symbol of order in this House. As much as I may deplore the gesture that was made, I can understand the frustrations and I can understand the difficult situation we were in last night because of that vote which was not expected. There were few members in the House. Many of the people did not have time to come here in response to the bell which was short. I understand that. The issue was an important one for many of us and I sympathize with the members who could not be here because of the shortness of the bell.

Nevertheless, I do not excuse and I do not forgive anybody in this House who has the kind of behaviour that attacks the symbols of this House and, as I said at the beginning, I am as embarrassed as anybody in this House with this incident and I deplore this type of behaviour.

**Mr. Chuck Cook (North Vancouver):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in defence of the member. Everyone here seems to have forgotten what caused this incident and how it came about that he was so incensed that he lost his cool, charged toward the Chair and committed an act which all of us deplore. I believe he should be admonished for that, but I also believe that the mitigating circumstances should make that admonishment very gentle.

The Deputy Speaker in the Chair last night, with four people standing and waiting to be recognized, chose to shut down the House. I think the Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Just a moment. That is getting to be very close to an attack on what the Deputy Speaker did last night.

• (1150)

The Deputy Speaker made a ruling. This whole case is about whether, when a Speaker has made a ruling, anyone has a right to challenge it, whether it be by debate or by extraordinary behaviour as has been the case here.