

*Privilege*

Suffice to say that some of us were greatly embarrassed yesterday by that demonstration. I understand that students can be frustrated and I understand also, having dealt with them all my life that sometimes things get out of hand. I do think that we have a serious dispute at this time, that it deserves consideration of this House. Mr. Speaker, I will leave it to you to decide whether or not there is a case here.

**Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan):** Mr. Speaker, I only wish to make a brief intervention on this very serious charge that has been laid in the House today.

As Whip of the New Democratic Party I want to say a couple of things. I want to indicate that I was not contacted as Whip. I want to indicate that the deputy Whip of my caucus was not contacted, that the deputy House leader in his capacity as acting House leader was not contacted by the Sergeant-at-Arms, by the Clerk at the table, by the Speaker's office, by any member of this House or any employee of this House in advance of the activity that occurred in the gallery behind you, Mr. Speaker.

We had no formal notice by any official.

• (1520)

It is important that I separate the official notice and the unofficial notice, in terms of the information that came to us. I also want to clearly state, from the basis of my own discussions with my caucus colleagues and staff of the New Democratic Party caucus, that we had no informal knowledge, we had no advance notice, there was no conspiracy, and no working relationship to ensure that a demonstration occurred in this House.

It is not acceptable to us that demonstrations occur in the gallery. I think all members should realize and remember that demonstrations have occurred in every gallery in this House, in the public galleries at either end, the NDP gallery, the Liberal gallery, and the government gallery. And for every one of those events, at least in the two side galleries, members of Parliament would have to provide the appropriate passes, for people to sit in those chairs.

We, as members, have a responsibility, whether it be constituents from our ridings, a citizen of this country, or a visitor to this country, to provide them with access to the House of Commons. On many days, there are lineups outside the opposition gallery door because the demand for seats is so high. But we do not, as a matter of course, demand that these people sign a form saying that they are going to be good little boys and girls. That is not our job. For us to even suggest that to them would make them wonder about our role here.

The second point I want to make is that I want to confirm the comments made by my colleague, as they relate to the Question Period process. He is absolutely correct that at the end of our morning executive meeting, where every day we meet and receive the applications for statements and questions, the matter of the students was not raised. The matter of a question concerning students was not raised. It was only later in the day, as the member described, that the matter was raised directly with us and a decision was made to put that member on the list. In fact, I can remember, full well, at 1.35 or 1.40 p.m., when it was discovered that our list, that piece of paper that we give to you indicating our lineup had not been changed to reflect the decision and the member who rose to respond to the government's charge was not even on the "list".

Mr. Speaker, I believe, while obviously it is your responsibility to make the decision, that there is no *prima facie* evidence and that there is no need to refer this matter to committee for further review.

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford):** Mr. Speaker, every year, during the many years I have had the privilege of sitting in this House, we have had students' day, for members of the Canadian Federation of Students. Every year, members of the various parties are advised of their forthcoming visit. Every year we are asked to put questions that draw the government's attention to their requests, and so the question of the hon. member who is being accused today was very appropriate.

Every year, Mr. Speaker, since I have been here, in any case, we have had more or less the same scenario. The debate the parliamentary secretary asks us to take part in today is worthy of the best debates by student politicians.