

Privilege

Mr. Nowlan: So, beware, otherwise I will be raising another point of privilege.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I notice the hon. government House leader is suggesting I should look around for someone to speak on my behalf, but I will let it go for the moment.

I noticed that the Board of Internal Economy was referred to as the board of "eternal" economy. That is something for which some citizens would very much compliment us for.

The incident that happened is not amusing. I think that especially for the public watching this particular exchange it does little credit to anybody in this country to use whatever subterfuge they can to come into this place, which is symbolic of our democracies, our freedoms and our liberties, and abuse them.

The incident that happened, so far as the person involved in this incident is concerned, is of course absolutely inexcusable. It was not brave. It was cowardly and sneaky. It goes against everything we believe in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1520)

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier has raised an absolutely legitimate point, and it was commented upon further by the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

With respect to procedure, the fact of the matter is that under our rules, if it is a question of privilege or contempt of the House, there is an obligation that it be raised at the first opportunity. The hon. parliamentary secretary has followed that. However, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, who has been very frank with us all has made a suggestion, which has been especially confirmed now by the hon. House leader of the government, that this matter should be stood down until the hon. member whose passes apparently were used has a chance to speak to the Chamber.

I am very conscious of the fact that the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier as House leader of the Official Opposition had contacted the hon. member. He has stood up in this House and said that the hon. member said that he did not know that this was going to happen.

That is there in front of us, but I think it is appropriate that we invite our colleague to address us further in the matter.

Again, I say, because ultimately I am responsible for the security in this place, that I am deeply disturbed that this could happen.

I say to any other Canadians who think it is smart to pull a stunt like this, that while they break the law they abuse their privileges. If they are ever in trouble, they will be calling on all of us to protect them very rapidly.

DISTURBANCE IN GALLERIES

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, we have appreciated your words, as usual.

I am hesitant to raise a related matter first raised by my hon. friend from Thunder Bay—Atikokan, but I feel I must.

Yesterday, immediately following the incident, a number of members opposite, some of whom are here today, accused members of the New Democratic Party, as we were leaving, of having orchestrated this event. That occurred when I left the Chamber, and it apparently went on with others. Others brought to my attention this morning that as early as this morning they were being accosted, again, by a number of members from the government side who were accusing our party of being a party to this organized demonstration.

I do not raise this as a question of privilege. I do not even know if it is a point of order, quite frankly.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, it was very offending to all of us to be accused of doing something that we feel so strongly about in a most negative way.

I do not know if it would be appropriate for the government House leader to say something at this time. I do not want to make a big issue out of this. It is not worthy of that.

But, as I say, our party members were certainly offended. We would just as soon drop the whole matter, but I would expect some comments.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I cannot comment on whether individual members may have accused individual members of the New Democratic Party of being party to this incident.