

are going to complete the construction that was begun last year under a quick start project.

I want to emphasize that we intend to listen to members of Parliament from the greater Toronto area. We intend to listen to the leaders of the municipalities, the city of Toronto and other communities in that area to make sure that when we do something at Pearson we do the right thing.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of three distinguished visitors: His Excellency Sung-Joo Han, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea; Hon. Jim Smith, Minister of Community and Social Services of the Nova Scotia Legislature; and Hon. Dan Miller, Minister of Skills, Training and Labour of the Legislature of British Columbia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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PRIVILEGE

MEMBER FOR MARKHAM—WHITCHURCH—STOUFFVILLE

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege to clarify an issue that has become a subject of debate not only in this Chamber but also across the nation.

This has impeded my ability to function effectively and efficiently as the member of Parliament for the riding of Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville. This is the earliest opportunity for me to address the issue in the House.

Approximately two weeks before allegations against me first appeared in the media, I was contacted and threatened by an anonymous telephone caller. It was suggested to me that I should withdraw a pending appeal against the Toronto Board of Education at the Court of Appeal level; if I did not I would become front page news and suffer dire consequences. I ignored this threat and as a result I am standing before the House today.

Threats of blackmail or intimidation should not and will not compromise my commitment to free speech as a member of Parliament. Since this threat was made, accusations about my qualifications have been reported in the media.

• (1505)

These accusations have seriously damaged my personal and professional credibility. In fact the media went beyond making simple accusations. They carried on a campaign of character assassination and were joined by others who jumped on the

Privilege

bandwagon to discredit my qualifications. I was accused, tried, convicted and executed due to their sheer ignorance. They created an hysteria without checking the facts with me regarding my academic credentials. Some accusations such as exaggerating my qualifications were mild in comparison to assertions of outright lying about my credentials.

On the public record I categorically refute all accusations of lying, exaggerating or misrepresenting any of my academic credentials.

I have earned a bachelor of science degree, a master of science degree in physics, a master of education degree in administration, a post graduate certification in education and, last but not least, a certification of completion of intermediate in laws abbreviated as LLB intermediate from the University of London.

I would like to add that none of these credentials is honorary or purchased from a diploma factory. I would also like to add that LLB intermediate is not a degree. It is a recognition of successful completion of two years of law education at the University of London, England.

To clear any doubts whether any such recognition exists, I would like to quote relevant information from the certificate of completion sent by the registrar of the University of London on February 2, 1994. It reads: "This is to certify that Jag Bhaduria passed the intermediate examination in laws in 1976 in the following subjects", et cetera, et cetera. I respectfully request unanimous consent to table these documents.

I have also been accused of misrepresenting myself or representing myself as a lawyer. I have never been a lawyer or represented myself as a lawyer to anyone. Even completion of a law degree will not entitle me to practise law without fulfilling further requirements. There are many persons in Ontario and in other provinces who do possess completed law degrees but are not lawyers.

I can understand the anger generated by these wild, false and baseless accusations. I agree with and applaud the right hon. Prime Minister when he stated that he does not like being lied to. Nor do I. Nor does any hon. member of the House.

With my conviction and firm belief in the policy of honesty and integrity of elected officials at all levels, I refute these false allegations in the presence of my peers in the House. We do not have to be saints but we must strive to uphold these principles. I invite my colleagues in the House to examine my academic credentials and weigh the accusations in a rational and judicious manner.

In conclusion I request the House to ensure that no Canadian be subjected to the demeaning and humiliating accusations I have been confronted with since becoming a member of Parliament.