

*Government Orders*

responsibility for the protection of the reputation of the institution seriously.

It is all there. Go through it a little bit. You could rise on a bunch of headlines in newspapers today and make the case and you can make it persuasively. Then it follows: committee investigation and then punishment. There is a rhythm there. Contempt of this institution is viewed by the law to be a crime that sort of takes us in the direction of treason. We just do not do it. We do not seem to have the courage to do it.

**Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that I have an opportunity to get up and speak to the government motion today.

I want to say at the outset that I have no intention of calling for the heads of anybody or for anybody to be put before a firing squad. I think that is taking things to ridiculous and very violent extremes, even in this debate.

The motion that has been put before us is one to deal with decorum and civility in the House of Commons. It appears to me that this motion only attempts to reaffirm what is already supposed to happen in this place. Surely the majority of us, as members of Parliament, already know about a basic level of decorum and a basic standard of decent behaviour. It seems incredible to me that the government even brings this motion forward for debate.

What we have seen in the House of Commons in the last month in fact has been comments made in this place that have nothing at all to do with decorum, but have instead to do with racist and sexist attitudes. It seems to me that this motion that the government has put forward simply fails to address those two very critical issues that we have all seen in the media in every area of this country, and that is sexist comments and racist comments.

I believe that the government motion totally misses the point.

Racism and sexism permeate our society and Canadians, by the number of letters that I have received over the two most recent examples in the House of Commons, and the number of phone calls that I have

received, are just not going to accept this at all any more. They are fed up with those kinds of attitudes.

It is not surprising that those attitudes are still surrounding us. Some of these attitudes in society are overt as they were in the race riots that we saw in Nova Scotia recently in the high school there. Some of these attitudes are subtle and the person to whom it is directed only finds out by accident that they have been denied a job or housing based on their race. There was an instance of a case of a visible minority woman who tried to rent an apartment and was told that the apartment was filled. Shortly thereafter a white person entered and asked about the apartment and was given that apartment to rent.

Some of us have grown up with these attitudes around us here in Canada. A very competent woman administrator was told to her face that she would not get the job she was applying for because they were looking for a man. This particular woman does not herself support equality issues. She does not see the connection between what happened to her in that individual circumstance and what happens to women in the Public Service.

There is a female engineer who was told by her male colleague that she was not an engineer, that she was just a stupid woman. Another woman's boss told her that if he were her husband, he would beat her black and blue. A woman with a degree in naval architecture who had operated her own electronics shop was asked during a job interview if power or hand tools scared her, was she afraid to get dirty.

These are all examples that come from our own federal Public Service. Negative attitudes toward women and visible minorities and other disadvantaged groups do have a direct economic impact on these whole groups of people.

I received from a woman in Nova Scotia who wrote to me saying that she was tired of seeing me up on my feet in this place, always whining, always complaining about what happens to women in our society. She said to me she did not know if I was married or not, but if I was married what I really needed was a good kick in the butt from my husband. Those attitudes are still out there in society. It shocked me. I was surprised—I am surprised I continue to be shocked—but they are still out there in society. There are serious problems in Canadian society: race riots in Halifax, shootings of black youth, violence against women in every community in this country from