

*Government Orders*

amendments and make them. They do it collectively across party lines.

The degree to which we work together on behalf of Canadians is one of the best kept secrets in this whole country. We do, all of us know that. Time after time after time we work together on an investigation or on a piece of legislation in committees. We work together well because people come here with talent. They are selected from their communities because they have talent and they have commitment. Then they come here.

The institution itself is viewed negatively. If you have a collection of people like that with concerns like that, ideological differences sure but really decent human beings who care and who are cared about, how can you bring them into a collective and have a negative perception of the place?

Ultimately we have had the negative perception in part because of the potency of television and the decision many years ago, before any of us came, to put television in the House. In many ways we have a rotten journalistic process in this country. It is a rotten, rotten, rotten journalistic process that depends on advertisers' dollars in large measure which believes that news must be encapsulated as a mini-drama with a hero and a villain in every situation.

The most discrepant view gets attention with the most common well vetted view. They get equal time. There is a perception over time of leaders in our society. They are high profile political leaders, but also doctors, dentists, clergymen, policemen and boy scout leaders. They are all being denigrated because the media give prominence to aberrant behaviour by a member of a class and do their thing which is create a mini-drama with a hero and a villain.

This Chamber itself is something that collectively we could do something about. Collectively we could change the reputation of it. I saw no hope for that at three o'clock in the morning watching the replay of just two of the speeches by two of the leaders in the Chamber.

I want to attack the New Democratic Party thesis. One basic message of the House leader of the Liberal Party was that this is an adversarial place. I say yes. I agree. I hope it never changes. This is the place for the free exchange of ideas. This is the place to argue. This is the place ultimately to vote.

Where else in society do we have adversarial situations? We happen to be in the middle of the World Series. We are headed toward the Grey Cup. The whole athletic team world is an adversarial world.

I have a little picture in my mind: "Ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to bring you this year's Grey Cup. We have a little surprise for you. Today we are going to make the coach and the management of each of the teams responsible for the rules. We are not going to have any referees during the whole Grey Cup, and aren't you excited? How well do you think it will work?"

That is where I began as a young man. I was heavily into athletics and I ended up as a referee. I refereed national championships in basketball and other sports. You could never be a referee without the concurrence of the players, the coaches and management. They give you that authority. They give you the rule book. If you are fair and consistent and clear on what those rules are and the enforcement of those rules, they give you their support even in very emotional moments. They give you the power to punish. For example, a technical foul in basketball or an ejection for a fist fight in a football game. Think about how little referees are sometimes and how big football players are and how many football players there are. If they wanted to crush that referee with their fists it would be boom, done, gone.

• (1300)

This place gives that authority to the Chair. It is pretty well accepted practice that we do not comment on the behaviour of the occupant of the chair because we have respect for the Chair as a symbol.

However we easily slide into something else. The House leader for the New Democratic Party said to the Speaker at the commencement of his speech the other day: "We want to congratulate you on your excellent work, Mr. Speaker". The Chair did not cut him off. I do not think anybody noticed. That was a comment in this Chamber to an individual about that individual on the quality of the work.

In this Chamber that is debatable. There is an obligation to debate it if you open the door. You should not comment on the occupant of the chair and whether he or she does a good job or a bad job because the minute you do it is debatable. You cannot be on one side. It is an adversarial place.