

don't have to use inappropriate language or gestures in the process. There is a distinction to be made. I think the impression has been given, because we have not been vigilant enough, that there was a connection between the two. Well, these are two things that can and must be separated. We must separate them. We have no choice.

Partisanship can be used—when I am in a position to do so, of course—to shed a more favourable light on my party and to try and promote its values, programs and objectives. It can also be used to emphasize, from time to time, what other parties are doing wrong, or to demonstrate the superiority of my own political group. However, there is a major distinction between partisanship and language and gestures that are distasteful.

Mr. Speaker, the question arises why we are considering this particular motion now: I have been in the House for nearly three years, and during that time I have noticed gestures and heard terms and phrases that have been censured since time immemorial. It is mainly because of two recent incidents: the sexist and outrageous language used by one government member, and the racist term used by another government member, and all this in the past month. And I am sure that my own constituents and those of my colleagues are very upset.

When these incidents occurred, I received some telephone calls here in Ottawa, from people who told me: What is going to happen to those people because of what they did? If I am not mistaken, nothing did happen. They were probably censured by their colleagues. Something was said about it here in the House, and they were reprimanded. But did they lose their jobs? Were they expelled from the House for a number of days or weeks or months? No! And now people are wondering why. They want to know how to show their disapproval of this kind of behaviour.

[English]

When the member for Halifax was addressing this question, I asked: "Why do you think this is happening right now?" She hesitated for a moment and then she finally said: "I hate to say it, but I think sexist language often reflects the deep anger that people hold toward women and that they do not understand why". I re-

flected upon that and I suspect there is a great deal of truth in what was said.

When she responded to why there were racist slurs or expressions toward another individual, her explanation was very, very similar. I would like to be able to reject that, but I cannot do so in good conscience. I know that in some instances that is not the case, but I fear that in too many instances that is in fact so.

I also asked the member for Halifax what could be done to counteract this.

• (1430)

Of course, there were a number of measures not only proposed by her but by others. For example, we need to in fact deal with it rapidly, sternly, and we need to develop an attitude that this kind of behaviour is totally, totally unacceptable.

The people who do that will be reprimanded severely not only by their party but by the House itself. We need to educate people. We need to point out what errors are made. We need to be patient at times, but we also need to be very firm when such occasions demand it.

The one question that I asked her, she admitted to me later on, my hon. colleague from Halifax, why was this behaviour defended by members of that same party. I could not understand that. I remember being a member of the Beaudoin—Edwards constitutional committee where a member of government, I do not know what it is that caught that particular member that day, unleashed a tirade against a particular political leader. Immediately, without hesitation, the co-chair reprimanded that individual and dissociated himself from those remarks.

The same could have been done here. You do not defend that kind of inappropriate behaviour. Why does this behaviour happen primarily in the House? We see each other in the corridors. We laugh, we tease, we cajole. Why, why? There is no doubt that it is the 15 second clip that we are looking for.

What an example for youth. I am the father of three daughters who ask me: Why do I bother working in this place if I am going to be treated like that, treat others like that or perhaps be in a position where I am seen to be exhibiting that kind of behaviour. They are amazed.