

*Point of Order*

I think being fair is something that we would like to always work toward as an appropriate goal. If people had read carefully what the president of PSAC was doing we would know full well that he was not personally advocating violence against women.

I do not know who determines the government's speaking list but I notice that this issue was raised three times on that day. There were two statements during Question Period where they incorrectly referred to Mr. Bean as being vice-president of the New Democratic Party. Of course he is not.

To take a letter and probably unconsciously and certainly inadvertently distort its intent is incorrect. It is not that this never happens but when we raise issues about one of us in this House it is done knowing full well that that individual will have an opportunity to stand up and defend himself or herself.

I think it is an unfortunate initiative to attack someone in such a vicious way who is outside this House. This is with the knowledge that as long as those comments are made here they are not actionable and if they were made outside the door you would probably end up in a court of law.

I suspect we all share this. I appreciate the comments made by my colleague the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader who says that he even now supports the general thrust of the argument.

It is for that reason that I think we would like to call on you to give us some guidance as to the appropriate way to proceed in the future.

**Mr. Speaker:** I appreciate very much the tone of the intervention of the hon. member for Kamloops. I appreciate the other interventions that have been made today.

This matter arose several days ago. To be very frank with the House I am still looking at it.

There is an issue here which is not quite as easy to resolve as might at first seem. First, a particular incident took place outside the Chamber. The Chair is not in any particular position to know what exactly took place outside the Chamber except what I may have heard.

Second, moving away completely from the incident to which we have been referring, we have matters that get

into the public domain outside the Chamber. It is sometimes difficult to find the line between what is inappropriate to mention or comment with respect to them and what is appropriate.

I think that the point that was made in general terms that we ought to constrain ourselves considerably in making comments about someone outside this Chamber which would in fact be defamatory under the laws of our country if made outside the Chamber is something which we should consider.

I will try to find a way of expressing this which will give us some guidance. I have been concerned that the use of highly suggestive language or innuendo sometimes on both sides of the House with respect to people or their associations with people can be very demeaning indeed.

This certainly moves the House to a response of irritation or anger which of course leads us to disorder.

I accept the interventions of hon. members that this is a matter which does require some careful thought. I will try to respond in a way that is helpful.

I hope that yesterday's incident is not taken as any indication that there is one standard for one side of the House and another standard for the other, or even one standard for those members who are close enough to the Chair that I can hear when they say something that is not appropriate, as opposed to those members at the very far end of the Chamber. Quite frankly, I cannot hear these comments most of the time.

I think the hon. member who was corrected by me and withdrew and apologized, was hurling words directly at a minister while the minister was responding. I felt that under the circumstances it was appropriate to stop it.

I just want to make it very clear that if I hear comments thrown by government members at hon. members opposite who are putting questions in the same manner, as long as I can hear them, I will certainly rule them out as far as being proper. I want to assure you the Chair is trying to make sure the law falls equally on both sides of the Chamber.

I am frankly heartened by members' comments this morning on this matter, and I think that it indicates a general sense in the Chamber that we do have to make an extra effort to make sure that the decorum of this