

I am here to talk though about how the House deals with it. The House has this tradition which you pointed out yesterday, but what I am submitting is that that tradition has developed around the question of personal insults and is not adequate to the problem of dealing with what are seen to be words that offend an entire group of people.

I might also say, Mr. Speaker, that in the same vein, although I think you were well within the tradition to deal with it the way that you did, that there are other motions which have existed over time in which unparliamentary words, as a result of motions, for instance, have had to have been recorded by the Clerk. The words which were used had to have taken place on the floor of the House, which is not what happened yesterday.

I would also ask you to consider that element of the existing tradition by which there have been instances where the offensive words have been put on the record, so to speak, particularly of course when they happen off the record, but members hear them as many members did yesterday. The words were withdrawn, but at no time was there a public acknowledgement of exactly what had been said. We are left to an ongoing debate about whether *x* was said or *y* was said.

We do know that there was an apology made and presumably people who apologize know what they are apologizing for and the House ought to be able to deal with that directly.

There is also the tradition, and again I refer to Beauchesne, that the member himself who has been offended has to be satisfied with the result of the exchange, in this case the withdrawal or apology. I contend that in the instance where the language is not the kind of personal language that the tradition has traditionally addressed itself to, there needs to be more happen than simply the withdrawal of a personal insult.

There should be an acknowledgement on the part of the member and/or someone speaking for the member's party that this not only reflects on the member who made this remark, but it reflects on the entire House of Commons, the government and the political process. It is simply not enough to get up and say you are sorry after all these things.

### *Point of Order*

As anyone knows, particularly those who are parents, you only get away with saying you are sorry just so often. At some point the behaviour has to change. It seems to me that is what this House has to address. I know there has been an informal committee struck already to deal with the question of sexist language. Mr. Speaker, you might want to consider ways in which that committee might be explicitly instructed to deal also with the question of racist language and other forms of language which offend groups, rather than just people.

That might be one way in which we could deal with it but in the final analysis, it is not just a question for the House. It is also a question for the government and I realize that is not a point I can pursue on a point of order, and I will not. However, it may be pursued by others in another context.

I would ask that all these things be taken into consideration by the Chair and that you might report to us at some point as to how you propose to deal with what I think is really a new development. We are not just talking about personal insults here, we are talking about a dimension of offensive language which goes far beyond what the tradition has been developed to deal with.

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, this perhaps gives me an opportunity to indicate some action that I have been talking about for well over a year. The whole question of the decorum of this institution has been the subject of much debate around the country. The Spicer commission indicated that people were disgusted with the behaviour of this institution, the barracking, the name calling, the yelling.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Andre:** You have not seen the tape. Ask your colleague there. He has seen the tape. Maybe he will stop that accusation. Your colleague from Kingston knows it is a false accusation. It is precisely this kind of barracking that is at the root of the problem here. This kind of false accusation, false demeaning and the attempt to slander. I would ask the hon. member to check the tape which his colleague, the hon. member for Kingston has seen, and stop making that accusation.