

Privilege

However, Mr. Speaker, although our ideologies may differ, I believe that respect for the institution lies at the very core of the democratic system in this country. For those who object to the rules of the game, there is always the democratic solution. That is the only weapon we wish to use, and I think that is part of the traditions and values of this country. Whatever our reservations may be about institutions, I think it is incumbent on us to respect this institution, because otherwise the entire structure will collapse.

It is the primary source of law and order. Mr. Speaker, of course we regret we must support a motion like the one tabled today. We bitterly regret this. Despite all the differences that exist between our various ideologies, our respect for the institution, for democracy and for the rule of law requires that we act thoughtfully and effectively in this case. I bitterly regret that we must vote on this kind of motion, but I feel that, if our fellow citizens are to have any respect for our institutions and for the rule of law I must vote in favour of the motion.

[English]

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of brief comments to make on what has become a very unfortunate incident which occurred here last evening. I listened to all sides of the point of privilege as well as the member's statement.

I was here as well, Mr. Speaker, and I must say I reviewed the tape. What I did not see was the member just walk down and touch the Mace. I saw the member charge down and grab the Mace with some physical force.

I think this is such a tremendous breach of etiquette in this House it by no means should be allowed to pass with a slight tap of the wrist. That is all I have to say.

• (1140)

[Translation]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, I must say I was shocked to see what happened yesterday.

However, a few weeks ago this House witnessed events and language which in my opinion were far worse than what we saw yesterday. The language was used in referring to a woman, as we all know, and the word translates as *plotte*, which is a better translation of "slut" than *traînée et putain*. In any case, the latter term is not

exactly idiomatic, and the correct term is extremely vulgar in Quebec.

My point is, Mr. Speaker, that at the time, no motion was tabled. There was no movement to reprimand the member in question, while this morning, people are making a big fuss. I agree we must have decorum in the House, and perhaps one way to achieve this is by reprimanding the hon. member directly, and that is why I support this motion, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for me to put myself into the feelings or the scenario that existed at the time of this incident. I understand it is very serious and I also understand that we must respect the decorum and the traditions of this House.

I am particularly concerned right now at what I see to be a tendency to place all the blame on an individual. This incident is the culmination of what I believe is a progression, at least since I have been here. I believe both sides of the House and all parties and most members have been engaging in conduct which surely has not been the kind of conduct most beneficial to the image of this House.

Surely you, Mr. Speaker, who witnessed all of these incidents over the past few years must realize that we are the last people perhaps to tell you of how decorous we have been in our own conduct.

It seems to me as if I have suddenly arrived on another planet. There are people from some parties whom I have seen making certain gestures, who have said certain things, and all of a sudden today are white and pure as the snow. This is appalling. If this means that we are going to have decorum, if this means we are not going to have from both sides of the House the name calling, which I am not going to repeat because I think the names are disgusting, and if this means we are going to have a better functioning Parliament that all Canadians can believe in and can be proud of, then so be it.

I would just like to address myself to the question of a tap on the wrist. I am embarrassed by the incident. I believe my hon. colleague is embarrassed by the incident. I believe what is proposed is a serious gesture on the part of the Speaker. It is not the time right now to settle scores. It is not the time right now to gang up on anybody. Right now is the time to put to rest all of the foolishness we have been doing for the past few years. It