

### *Government Orders*

When a Member is speaking, no Member shall pass between that Member and the Chair, nor interrupt him or her, except to raise a point of order.

I fail to see how this Standing Order can really be enforced short of perhaps asking the pages here in the House of Commons to stand by members' desks and whack the desk or wrap their knuckles if they are starting to stand.

However, there are no individual penalties for the interrupters. The interruptions continue. Standing Order 18 reads:

No Member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any of the Royal Family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either House, or against any Member thereof. No Member may reflect upon any vote of the House, except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded.

These Standing Orders, although updated from time to time, come to us from a long tradition, from days in which this House was made up entirely of men and from traditions in the British House of Commons where also the traditions were established by men. The Standing Orders do not deal at all with racism or sexism in the House.

It is not just the matter of language. It is the attitudes that produce that kind of use of language. It is no comfort to me that now members will simply perhaps not hurl these insults. I want them to see women and minorities as real, full human beings deserving of equality and respect. That is the bottom line.

We have an association here now of women parliamentarians, a non-partisan association, where women in this House and women from the other place meet from time to time. That association has discussed what has happened in the House. We have discussed a number of issues, but we have discussed most recently the two incidents that I think have brought this motion forward by the government.

That association is now drafting a proposal for you, Mr. Speaker, and for the House that will ask for specific changes to the Standing Orders. These changes would permit a Speaker to remove a member from the precincts of this place, levy a fine, or withhold pay in cases of racist and sexist behaviour.

Let me say as a parent that when my children have from time to time displayed attitudes or behaviour

unacceptable to our family or in society there were consequences for their behaviour. That is how they learn. I think that is a policy that is used in schools across this country. It is a policy that is used by a coach of a minor sports team. If players on his or her team act inappropriately or display inappropriate attitudes they are sent to the showers.

It seems to me that here in this place there are no consequences for sexist or racist behaviour. They are what we need to see.

I am hoping that when this comes forward it will be taken very seriously. As I said it has the support of women from the government side, the Official Opposition and from my party as well, and there has been a great deal of discussion about it.

We all come to this place from various experiences. There are members who were teachers, social workers, lawyers, homemakers and doctors. We all bring a variety of experiences to the House of Commons. Some members of Parliament I suppose you would call professional politicians. They have been here for a long, long time. We come to this House with different experiences and from all regions of the country. I believe that does add a great deal of knowledge and a variety of different perspectives to the work that we do here.

However when many of us were elected we really did not know what we were going to be getting into. Many of us had no experience at all with the legislative process. I know there are many members in this House of Commons who have had no experience with equality issues. We make laws here; that is our job. We are supposed to represent our constituents. Let us all remember that over one-half of all our constituents are female. Let us remember that we live in an ethnically and racially diverse land with many different religions, many different languages and many different cultures.

We pass laws here that deal with immigration, with employment equity. What kind of attitude do the comments that we heard a couple of weeks ago bring to that debate and that discussion? These are not issues to be passed over just like any other insult. That is the difference between the government motion on decorum and what should happen with racist and sexist comments.

We are not talking about offending a single member in the House of Commons. We are talking about offending a whole group of people in society. Nowhere in the