

We have seen moments of emotion displayed in this House on many occasions, but in my time here I have never seen anyone run after the Sergeant-at-Arms and grab the Mace. It comes at a time when we have an ongoing discussion before this House on the conduct of members in this Chamber and I think it is something we have to talk about and think about, not only on a particular day when we are debating that subject. Certainly it is something we have to be thinking about and have in our minds every day that we sit in this place.

I agree with my colleague from Parkdale—High Park that the standing orders are very vague on this subject. I suppose when the standing orders were studied by committees of this House and recommendations made that no one ever perceived that a member would be running after the Sergeant-at-Arms to grab the Mace.

The question of decorum in this place is a very serious one. If 295 members in this Chamber decided they were not going to abide by the rulings of the Chair and were even going to challenge the Sergeant-at-Arms himself as he performed his duties at the end of the day after the House had been adjourned, then this place would simply cease to operate. Therefore, this matter must be taken very seriously.

I saw the look on the Sergeant-at-Arms' face as he stood just about six or seven feet away from me last evening when he suddenly realized someone was trying to pull the Mace from him. It is totally inappropriate, Mr. Speaker, and I think it points up why we must take a serious look at our conduct in this House.

If we are going to talk about the need for decorum in this House, for decency to one another, and respect for the institution of Parliament itself, then we have to do more than talk. We have to act accordingly as we perform our duties in this House.

It comes down to the fact that members must try to control their emotions. The Mace is the symbol of the authority of Mr. Speaker and that is why it heads the parade going down the Hall every day as we enter this place. Therefore, it should not be meddled with in any way. It was a challenge to your authority in the House, Mr. Speaker, there is no question about it.

The Speaker last evening made the appropriate ruling on the point of privilege and adjourned the House. All was in order. But I agree with my colleague who raised this issue originally, that we cannot treat this lightly. We

have the authority of the Chair to protect if this House is to function properly, and certainly we have the image of members of Parliament to protect if we do not conduct ourselves properly.

I do agree with the comments of the previous speaker. I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you take this incident very seriously because I have never seen it happen before in all my years here and it should never happen in this place again. I think members have to take stock of themselves and realize that if we are going to sit in the Parliament of Canada then we had better start treating this place and the institution of Parliament itself, and indeed the authority of the Speaker of this place, with the greatest possible dignity so that we can conduct the business of the people of Canada with respect.

**Mr. Speaker:** Just so that the House knows where we are going, I will recognize the hon. member for Calgary West and immediately afterwards I will recognize the hon. member for Eglinton—Lawrence and the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon. Then, given the disposition of the House, I would go to the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

**Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West):** Mr. Speaker, I too was present in the House last evening and witnessed the events. I think the description of those events that has been laid on the Table is accurate and is confirmed by the television tape. From my point of view, I think we have little choice in this Chamber but to support the motion that was moved by the first speaker today.

I had the opportunity last Friday to rise in the Chamber and speak on the issue of decorum in the House. I tried in my own fashion to indicate how I felt when the House allowed contempt inside this Chamber. It is difficult for people outside the Chamber to have a positive feeling about the Chamber and its importance in our society, and that contempt inside the Chamber had to be stopped by the collective courage of the members of the Chamber if we were to ever have a hope of restoring this institution to the kind of level of esteem with which it should be held.

Perhaps more eloquently than I could say are the words of a constituent from Melville, Saskatchewan. When I arrived at the House this morning there was a three page letter from a Mr. Almasi to the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, with copies to a number of the people in this Chamber, including yourself Mr. Speaker,