

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. That rule says that men shall be uncovered, not women.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member has obvious difficulty hearing. The rule very explicitly indicates "in his or her place". I regret that I must call it to the attention of the Hon. Member for Broadview-Greenwood. The Hon. Member will have to take the word of the Chair that it is with considerable regret that the Chair brings Standing Order 32 to her attention. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. McDonald: Mr. Speaker, I would ask for unanimous consent to be able to wear a hat. The lights are excessively bright in the House. Hon. Members who are wearing glasses are all going blind as a result of the lighting in the House. I have been here for less than a year. I do not want to go blind. I am not a sheep like the rest of you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the Hon. Member for Broadview-Greenwood have unanimous consent of the House to wear a protection against the glare?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): No.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would hope that some sensibility would come to the House and that unanimous consent would be given. I point out to the Hon. Member who is now trying to run to his seat that when he said, "no" he was not in his seat and therefore it should be disregarded. I believe there was unanimous consent.

[Translation]

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, I would not want to let my colleague of the Opposition think that his party has a monopoly on sensibility. That is why I would urge my colleagues to understand that the Hon. Member ought to be allowed to make her speech with a hat on. I plead with my colleagues—

[English]

I plead with my colleagues to give their consent and to bring a little sense to the debate tonight. I ask them at least to understand that there are all kinds of reasons, but the one given by the Hon. Member for Broadview-Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) is extremely valid. I do not see why we should have a debate on it tonight. I am very anxious to listen to what Hon. Members have to say, not to delay by various procedures taking a decision tonight. Therefore I ask my colleagues, as the Hon. Member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) indicated, to allow the Hon. Member unanimous consent.

Western Grain Transportation Act

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, this Party agrees unanimously. We note that all NPD Members are blind ideologically but we do not think they should be blind physically.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. Ever since I have been here we have heard about equality of the sexes in the House. I agree with equality of the sexes in the House, but there has continuously been blatant discrimination here. I moved a motion under the provisions of the old Standing Order 43 many years ago that there be equality in the House among Hon. Members of both sexes. It was not even allowed by the then Speaker who ruled in a rather imperial manner—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Does the Chair understand that the Hon. Member is refusing unanimous consent?

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In that case there does not appear to be unanimous consent.

Miss Bégin: Mr. Speaker, I regret that you ruled on this just a few seconds ago. I wish the Minister of Health, who I think is a compassionate person, were also a medical doctor. She does not have the technical Ph.D. but has a lot of common sense. In the name of all Hon. Members, I would like to support the one who needs a hat because of the exaggerated volume of the lights in the House. I have written to the Speaker more than once on this matter. It is a physical problem which should be recognized and Hon. Members should be permitted to wear hats.

• (2210)

Mr. Flis: Mr. Speaker, two years ago I raised with Madam Speaker the matter of the damage these intense lights are doing to our eyes. I think the Hon. Member is correct when she draws this to our attention again. The reason she did not get unanimous consent is her reference that she is not going to be like the rest of the sheep in this Chamber. If the Hon. Member withdraws that remarks, she will probably get unanimous consent.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne) to reconsider on a number of grounds. In particular, I think there has been considerable dialogue between the Members of the House of Commons and the administration of the House of Commons with regard to the problems that the lighting is causing. The Hon. Member is aware, I am sure, that there has in fact been a study under way for some time as to the effect of the lighting on the vision of the Members of the House. I want to assure the Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi that if he should ever desire to wear a hat, we would be delighted to give unanimous consent to allow him to do so.