



CANADA

Debates of the Senate

2nd SESSION

• 39th PARLIAMENT

• VOLUME 144

• NUMBER 50

COMMENTS BY MEMBERS OF HOUSE OF COMMONS

Statement by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

THE SENATE

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Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I wish to make a few comments on the rules of order and decorum that govern the practices of our Houses of Parliament.

Recurrently, some members of the other place have made inaccurate and erroneous statements concerning the functioning of this place, in particular, on the progress of legislation in this house. I contend that these types of remarks made by members of one house about the other house are completely inappropriate and unparliamentary.

Any member of Parliament, whether from the Senate or the House of Commons, who attempts to discredit either institution by disparaging its character or by propagating falsehoods not only misleads the Canadian public on the work that we carry out as parliamentarians, but furthermore undermines the integrity of Parliament as a whole.

I read at pages 522 to 523 of Marleau and Montpetit's *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*:

Disrespectful reflections on Parliament as a whole, or on the House and the Senate as component parts of Parliament are not permitted. Members of the House and the Senate are also protected by this rule.

The passage continues:

This 'prevents fruitless arguments between Members of two distinct bodies who are unable to reply to each other, and guards against recrimination and offensive language in the absence of the other party.'

[*Translation*]

It is completely unacceptable for a member to accuse this chamber or one of the members of this chamber of disrupting the legislative process. The houses of Parliament can certainly complement each other, but the fact remains that they were created as two distinct entities.

[*English*]

Honourable senators, this is not a place where legislation is aimlessly approved. On the contrary, every bill arriving here merits the careful scrutiny and time for study by each and every member of this chamber.

As parliamentarians, we enjoy the privilege of free and civil debate, but we must always carry out this privilege with moral responsibility and with the highest degree of respect for our institutions and for one another.
