

SPEAKER'S RULING

POINTS OF ORDER ON

SENATORS' STATEMENTS AND QUESTION PERIOD

Honourable Senators,

On February 12, after Question Period, Senator Cordy rose on a point of order to challenge the propriety of a remark made by another senator during the previous sitting while she was participating in Senators' Statements. Later, on February 26, Senator Fraser rose on a point of order respecting comments by the Leader of the Government in the Senate during Question Period that day. This Ruling addresses both points of order.

While the Speaker does have authority, under Rule 18(1), to intervene to keep order, the tradition here is that senators themselves are to a great extent responsible for maintaining order. In practice, the Senate is largely self-regulating, and Speakers have been careful not to be too heavy-handed.

I have reviewed both incidents as they appear in the Debates. The words appear to be within the bounds of the give and take that occurs in any parliamentary body.

While the comments in themselves were not out of order, I do invite all honourable senators to show care in how they frame interventions so as to avoid any unnecessary offence. We must always be wary of allowing any disorder to seep into our proceedings.