

How the Media Can Help Improve Political Decorum

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Tuesday, October 02, 2012

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It's nice to see a willingness to open up political discourse in BC to the possibility of maturity, respect and dignity in the legislature. It would be nice, however for the media to be able to really embrace what that would look like.

At the UBCM last Thursday, the NDP leader delivered his pre-election speech to local government folk. We encounter this baffling sentence in a piece about that speech. See if you can spot the non sequitur:

Dix told the UBCM delegates he wants to take name-calling and personality issues out of B.C. politics, but he started off his speech with a jab at the Liberals for not holding a fall session.

via [Dix considers axing B.C.'s balanced budget law | CTV British Columbia News](#).

Name calling and personality attacks actually have to look like name calling and personality attacks. If Dix said he wanted to get away from those, and he then used them, then he'd be a hypocrite.

That may have happened, but based on this media report, they didn't.

Reporting that Dix was critical of a democracy/policy choice for the government to not want to be accountable in a fall legislative session calls nobody a name and attacks no one's personality. It merely criticizes a political stance.

If Dix happened to call someone a name or attack their personality, the onus is on the reporter to actually demonstrate that.

Confusing a policy criticism with name calling or a personality attack is sloppy, disingenuous, or at the very least counter-productive.