

candidate the local party chooses for you, man or woman (and it's more likely to be a man); under our measure, even if you were firmly loyal to one party, you would still have two different candidates to vote for. So voters' choice is increased, not decreased.⁷⁰

He further claims that the equality it seems we both desire can be better achieved by other means. We support all those means to greater equality. They are good measures towards equality. But so is ours; why not have all these measures towards equality?⁷¹

He claims that it is somehow patronising and demeaning to 'help' women by ensuring they are represented equally in Parliament.⁷² This measure is not about 'helping' women who do not deserve to be in Parliament. It is rather about restoring Parliament to its true representative function. You might as well say that the Great Reform Act of 1832, which changed the situation to one where cities of hundreds of thousands of people and villages of a few hundred returned the same number of MPs to one where constituencies were of equal size, was 'helping' voters in cities.⁷³ It was not; it was simply giving them fair representation.

Now to my points.

Parliament represents the British people. Except that it doesn't. A young woman - a woman of any age - looking at Parliament still sees it dominated by men. So, too, do young men. So, too, do men of all ages. This reinforces the notion for everyone that it is men who run society, and that women are in positions of power only by sufferance.

MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITION

On a point of information.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Yes please.

MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Government's measure will only add weight to the notion that women are in Parliament on sufferance, because they will be; they will be there not on merit, but because of a quota system.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

They will not be there because of a quota system; they will be there because they have been elected.⁷⁴ And a Parliament with the same proportion of elected women members as the proportion of

70 This is a very effective piece of rebuttal, as it engages with the objection on principle to the proposed mechanism by expanding on the workings of the mechanism and showing that proper use of the mechanism can answer this objection. Also, it ends with a nice concise antithesis ('increase' vs 'decrease').

71 Accepting the other side's counter-proposal and simply adding it to the Government's proposal. Their counter-proposal loses its force when it is added to the Government's proposals, and then made better by having the Government's proposal added to it.

72 That isn't exactly what the Leader of the Opposition said. It is not a complete misrepresentation, though; it is fair tactics to present your opponents' views in the least flattering light.

73 As with the earlier example of Margaret Thatcher, it's handy to have a store of examples from history like this. It is not an exact analogy - no analogy is exact - but it is near enough to make the point, and to draw the debate back to the ground of 'fair representation', which is where the Government is strongest.

74 This sounds good, and is a nice example of antithesis. Unfortunately, it doesn't really answer the POI. Yes, the women MPs will not be in Parliament unless they are elected; however, it is not true to say they will not be there because of a quota system. They will be. The Deputy Prime Minister would be better off reiterating the Government's defence of the quota system.

women in the world will send the message that women are of equal importance in the world.

This brings me to my second point. An equal Parliament will send another message. It will send the message to girls and young women that they can be as powerful, as high achieving, as important as boys and men.⁷⁵ And this will change the way they see themselves and, ultimately, change society, as more women move into positions of power and influence not only in politics but also in business, in sport, in public services, throughout society.⁷⁶ To give an example. Over 11 million people watched England play in the semi-final of the Women's Football World Cup in the summer of 2019. Why? Because it was shown live on free to air TV; in other words, it was given equal representation with men's football. As a result, tens of thousands of girls have been encouraged to take up football and other kinds of sport. What the Lionesses have done for sport, our measure can do for the exercise of power.⁷⁷

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

On a point of information.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Yes please.

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

You talk a lot about the importance of the way women are perceived, the importance of the messages we send, the importance of image. What about the importance of action?⁷⁸ It's not much consolation to a woman on low pay, returning to work earlier than she should after having a child because she is on a zero hours contract with no maternity benefits, suffering sexual harassment from her boss,⁷⁹ to know that privileged, middle class, educated MPs happen to be 50% female.⁸⁰

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

An equal Parliament would be more likely to pass laws that tackled this kind of exploitation.⁸¹

(CHAIR gives the knock for four minutes.)

To my final point. What sort of country do we want to live in? One where one group dominates over another, or one where all sectors of society are equally represented? A British Parliament that is equal will send a message to the world that Britain is an equal society. The

75 Anaphora with a crescendo.

76 Good use of asyndeton.

77 A good analogy, as very vivid and memorable, but also relevant; the equal time given to women's sport is itself a kind of quota system closely analogous to the quota system proposed for Parliament. The rather vague assertion about the thousands of girls inspired to take up sport is hard to prove and may not be true, but it is likely enough to be worth making.

78 More anaphora ('importance ... importance ... importance ...') but also antithesis, contrasting image with action, and doing so via erotema, a rhetorical question.

79 Enargia, painting a picture of life for the low paid woman.

80 This POI is essentially saying your Action is not dealing with something that's wrong with Now (see Chapter 6).

81 This makes some attempt to address the POI, but in quite a cursory way. The 'more likely' reveals a lack of certainty in the effectiveness of the equal parliament in dealing with these issues, and the Deputy Prime Minister doesn't address the point about the social and economic background of MPs and how this may cut them off from the concerns of poorer people. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has won this point.