ANDREW MARR:
Well Michael Gove is still here and we’re joined again by Harriet Harman. Harriet, what did you make of Michael’s defence of the Sally Morgan defenestration?

HARRIET HARMAN:
Well, I’m very worried about it indeed. Leaving aside the question of the independence of Ofsted and political appointments to these public jobs, there is a common denominator here. You’ve got Liz Forgan in the Arts Council, you’ve Suzi Leather, now Sally Morgan, and my concern is that we’re having a sort of cull of senior, authoritative women and they’re all being replaced by men. So I think the Public Administration Committee ought to look into this, because we don’t have enough women in senior positions, and this is the common denominator that’s happening. (To Gove) What is your problem in your government with women that, it’s like raining men in the Tory party.

MICHAEL GOVE:
I mean, we don’t have a problem with women in the Tory party, we made one Prime Minister and she did a fantastic job. And I know that you were opposing everything that she was doing at the time, Harriet, but it’s striking that, I know that many of the
people that I’ve had the opportunity to appoint to public posts, for example the head of Ofqual, the exam regulator, or the head of the School Teachers’ Pay Review Body have been distinguished women in public life. I agree with you –

HARRIET HARMAN:
So there’s no problem?

MICHAEL GOVE:
Well I agree with you that there is the broader problem in attracting women into positions in public life, and I think it’s important for politicians to rise above partisanship.

HARRIET HARMAN:
(over) It’s not a problem of attracting the, it’s a problem of actually appointing them and when they’re in the job not firing them and replacing them with men. And I think it would be better if we all recognise that our politics, and our public appointments would be much better if there was a balanced team of men and women. So, you know, join us on this Michael instead of digging yourself in.

MICHAEL GOVE:
But Harriet, I was the person who appointed Sally, I appointed a Labour woman to this job.

HARRIET HARMAN:
(over) Well I know, but somebody now has made you get rid of her.

MICHAEL GOVE:
No, well we don’t-

HARRIET HARMAN:
And replace her with a man.

MICHAEL GOVE:
Well we don’t know whether or not it will be a man or a woman who replaces her.
HARRIET HARMAN:
Ok so it’ll be a woman?

MICHAEL GOVE:
(over) Because, well it’ll be an open recruitment process. We don’t believe in tokenism, we believe in meritocracy, and that’s one of the reasons why I’ve been delighted that the women I have appointed to senior positions have all been doing a fantastic job.

HARRIET HARMAN:
(over) But it can’t be a meritocracy if it’s all men, can it?

MICHAEL GOVE:
But it isn’t.

HARRIET HARMAN:
It always is.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Harriet, do you think the Labour party’s new proposals are going to make it easier for women to come into the top of the Labour party, given how many of the bosses of the trade unions are of course men?

HARRIET HARMAN:
But this is about –

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Talk about raining men, I mean…

HARRIET HARMAN:
Actually the majority of members of trade unions are women; women working in the private sector, women working in the public sector so to the extent that it actually puts into the hands of trade union members the right to vote, well you know, I mean,
actually there is strong concern in the Labour party, at all levels, to really redress the imbalance in British politics and we’re making (Gove over) loads of progress. We’ve still got far to go though.

MICHAEL GOVE:
That’s why Unite is led by feminist hero Len McCluskey and Paul Kenny of the GMB is getting in touch with his softer side, over the course of this weekend. I mean, you know, the thing is Harriet you can’t, (Harman over) you can’t have your cake and eat it.

HARRIET HARMAN:
(over) Well then you’ve got a lot in common with them. You’ve just expressed…
(Marr over)

ANDREW MARR:
This is enormously enjoyable but I’m afraid we have run out of time. That’s all we have got time for.

INTERVIEW ENDS