

*Government Orders*

when they stand and vote against this package is opposition to working harder. Are they opposed to working harder? I would like them to answer that. That is what the new rules do, they provide more hours—albeit under a less number of days. Look at the number of days other Parliaments sit.

We have to put it in the context of the legislative jurisdiction of this Parliament. We are a federation, and the whole range of sovereign powers that Parliaments operate under in this country is split. The provinces have a huge number of jurisdiction items that only they pass laws on. We have a limited number that we pass laws on. Essentially, we have about half the constitutional jurisdiction, and yet we sit more hours than governments that have the whole package.

Look at the example of France. France is a unitary state and its Parliament has full constitutional jurisdiction and yet it only sits 149 days a year—substantially less than we do. Australia, which is a better example because it too has a federation and therefore a split constitutional authority, sits for 66 days.

I have no hesitation in telling Canadians that I am sure we will get as much work done as we do now and I want to put the argument to my friends that we can actually be superior under the new model if we, as members of Parliament, do our jobs the way I think we should. I will speak to that in a minute.

I believe these changes are important and necessary. I would be prepared to live with them as a member of the government, or as a member of the opposition.

**Mr. Brewin:** The opposition. I hope you have the opportunity to experience that again.

**Mr. Thacker:** Well, I think around the turn of the century we will have a session in opposition, but it will not last long I hope.

This Parliament, with only half the constitutional authority, actually sits many more days than other Parliaments with the full range of constitutional authority.

Let us look at it from another perspective. What about the number of bills passed by other Parliaments per sitting day? Canada passes, on average, one bill per sitting day. That might seem like a lot, but Australia with the same constitutional jurisdiction as ours, passes 14

bills per sitting day. In short, its committees meet, get all these bills ready to go and when the members hit the House they do not need the same amount of time because they have had input before. That is the major point I want to put forth.

Under these changes, these 20 standing committees, divided into these five envelopes, can spend the time on what I think we are elected to do by our constituents; to sit on those committees and develop policies, to review departments, to review areas of the law and to make recommendations as to how these bills can be changed and how the laws can be changed so that they are more effective.

It is having input up front, before a legislated bill, a proposal hits the House.

• (1350)

Once you get a specific proposal it is not easy to change the principles and the broad philosophy behind it. I have always enjoyed the work at the policy level to try and get this input when it is at the bureaucratic level before it is put in the form of a bill. That is what the new rules will permit us to do.

There is not much political gain from that because it is often difficult in a final bill to say: "I am responsible for this clause or that clause." I can assure you, having been here for 12 years, that most of us as individuals have had an impact on the bills and on the broad policy thrust that the government has been prepared to pick up and change. I am very proud of our accomplishments.

Look at some other countries in terms of their production. The United States, which has an awesome jurisdictional authority, and because it is a super power, has a million different things to deal with; more than we do in Canada. It passes an average of 10 bills per sitting day.

The Netherlands passes 14 bills per sitting day. New Zealand, with its socialist government, passes eight bills per sitting day. Sweden, another socialist government, passes seven bills per sitting day. We pass one.

I think the case is clear that under the new proposals we will be able to pass more bills per sitting day, but that is not unusual because we are still only one per day compared to 14 in Australia, 14 in the Netherlands, 9 in Japan and 10 in the United States. Let us not think we