

*Government Orders*

Earlier the opposition was concerned that we were going to exclude the ability of groups to appear before these committees in the language used, that we would talk about technical witnesses. It was not intended to exclude in that sense and it will not be used in that sense. I think the amendments to the language are appropriate. The intent is to signal clearly what the McGrath commission had recommended, and to which everybody agreed, that a legislative committee should act a like legislative committee and that people appearing before the committee as witnesses should be there to critique the provisions of a specific bill, not the principle of the bill. Therefore, they should be knowledgeable in that sense. We think that is an improvement.

The envelope system will permit more government consultation on policy development. It will improve consultation prior to drafting, hopefully making for better laws.

We are providing the rules to experiment with television in committees, giving the same access as print, following the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

We are allowing, formally, minority reports to be tabled in the House. We are also allowing the member to speak to it on the floor of the House, which is a change.

• (1610)

Private Members' Business will adopt the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, another example of the government acting on the McGrath commission report. There will be only three hours of debate before a vote, instead of five, with an extra hour added on Wednesday to facilitate the substitution of Private Members' Business which we know will be helpful.

I have not gone into all the details. The parliamentary secretary, the member for Peace River will in the course of his debate be more specific on the details.

Let me say that the work of my parliamentary secretary, the member for Peace River, has been extraordinary in this whole exercise. Indeed, he has followed a long tradition in this regard.

He was a member of the McGrath commission and as a result is very familiar with the rules. He feels very intensely—as intensely as I or any other member of the House—about the importance of these rules and this institution operating in a business-like fashion. He has done an extraordinary job, and I want to say in this public way how much I appreciate the work he has done. In a very real sense, these changes would not be here but for the work he has done in this regard.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Andre:** Madam Speaker, we live in an extraordinary public environment today where all politicians, particularly those at the federal level, are held in disrepute.

I saw some public polling data the other day which asked people in every province of this country which government they felt closer to, the provincial government or the federal government. Every province was basically the same. About 12 per cent felt closer to the federal government and 78 or 80 per cent felt closer to their provincial governments.

**Mr. Milliken:** That's because they've had a Conservative government for six years.

**Mr. Andre:** I heard the member for Kingston and the Islands say it is all due to the fact that one party is in office at this time. I hope that was said in jest. I hope he feels that we do have a sincere, genuine, real problem in this country with respect to how people treat and feel about this institution, and how they feel about us. I hope he shares my view that that is very much a part—not the total—of the constitutional problems, the lack of unity that is evidencing itself throughout this country.

I hope he feels, as I do, that it is important that we not trivialize these debates over rules and this debate in the House of Commons by excessive partisanship and extreme language about motives.

I hope he feels that we do not need any more the extremes of our adversarial system. What we need is more evidence to show to the Canadian public that we can work together, that in the end, we have an interest first and foremost in this Parliament as opposed to our particularly partisan advantage.