

Government Orders

What I wanted to talk about are two of the changes he mentioned in his speech. First, he discussed the question of Private Members' Business and he indicated how the private members' rules changes had been developed through lengthy discussion. I agree with him. That discussion took place in a standing committee of this House where, in my view, all of these rules should have been discussed.

My first question to him is, why is he unwilling to refer this motion to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections where the matter could be viewed, opinions from interested parties heard and a report made to the House in due course? As he knows, every private members' rule is verbatim from the report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections that was adopted in June 1990.

The second question has to do with televising the standing committees. He talks about the new rule and what a fine thing this is. He must be aware that Motion No. 11, on the government's list of orders on the Order Paper, is a motion moved by me, seconded by one of his own members, the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona, moving concurrence in the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. That report provided detailed rules for the televising of committees of this House. If it had been adopted by the House and if the government had called it for debate, it would have solved the problem he has proposed in the order and, in fact, would have guaranteed the right of committees to have cameras in the committee sessions, which is not guaranteed under the rule changes the government is proposing today.

It is clear that the government will, in fact, control the televising of committees in a very authoritarian way, typical of this authoritarian government.

I wonder if the minister could tell us why it is he has refused to deal with the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections which was an all-party committee, an all-party report, recommending televising of committees in a comprehensive way, instead of doing it in this piecemeal fashion in the Standing Orders.

His speech was sweetness and light. To someone who had just tuned in and watched that, one would think that

the rule changes proposed were going to bring about the *annus mirabilis*. I can tell him that I think he could benefit from having studied the committee reports and refer these rules to committee in order to assist in their implementation.

Mr. Danis: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments.

He put a number of questions. The first one was: Why was this rules package not referred to committee?

• (1735)

The hon. member, the member for Kamloops and the parliamentary secretary for the House Leader are very well aware, as are the Whips, of the difficulties caused by the opposition parties with regard to the committee structure that we have had in this House for a few months. The hon. member would know that this rules package has been on the table, negotiated, for approximately 18 months. Every single one of those rule changes, all 64 of them, have been negotiated with both opposition parties. There has been plenty of time to deal with those.

Mr. Milliken: No public input.

Mr. Danis: The member says there has been no public input. The hon. member represents by himself probably over 100,000 people. The hon. member who asked the question is very well versed in House procedure. I know that he was a participant in the negotiations that were held with mainly the parliamentary secretary to the House leader, so he was there—correct me if I am wrong—negotiated and dealt with the 64 points.

That is not the original package. The original package was changed by the government House leader at the request of the the Official Opposition. Some things were taken out at the request of the New Democratic Party. This is the package we believe to be a fair and honest package that we have proposed to the House. The member for Kingston and the Islands, who is an expert in procedure and has been for a number of years, even before he was in this House, if he could vote on a free vote, I am positive that the hon. member would support our package.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a couple of things on the record.