

*Government Orders*

ment. I do this so that I can consider the bills that represent my constituents' best interests in this House.

The cutbacks in opposition days have reduced the number of issues that the opposition can raise. Therefore, the constituent voice will be greatly silenced.

I cannot support these rule changes. Parliament has a purpose and that purpose is to consider legislation. The government House leader is fond of saying that he was elected to govern. But he was not elected to govern. He was appointed to government and his appointment has put his colleagues in a conflict of interest situation. I urge them to rise above partisan politics and self-interest and vote against the motion.

There are issues that are fundamental to democracy: Are the rights of individuals paramount to the rights of the majority? Can the non-elected executive branch over-ride the elected legislature?

The issue of reform in the other place is not that different from the issue we are talking about today. The reason the public wants the other place reformed is because, first and foremost, the system is not working. They want the Senate to be elected to make these people accountable; they want it to be equal to be a check on the House of Commons; and they want an effective check on the executive branch.

• (1540)

I do not expect the government to suddenly realize, after listening to my speech, that the executive branch is different from the legislative branch. After all, just as King George I realized 100 years ago, a government can rule unimpeded by controlling the legislative branch.

I do hope that the members opposite will recognize that they are not the government. They have been summoned to this Parliament as legislators to consider government business that was set forth in the Speech from the Throne. The significance of the introduction of the pro forma bill following the first speech was to tell the government that we reserve the right to consider whatever matter we wish, not just the government's agenda.

I recognize that the members opposite may, out of ideology and personal interest, support much of what the government does. This item today, however, is not a partisan issue and not a government issue. It is an issue of interest solely to the legislative branch.

My honourable colleague, the member of Parliament for Ottawa-Vanier, one of the most distinguished parliamentarians around, has already pointed out to the House of Commons that rules should be initiated by a committee of the Commons. They certainly should not be initiated by the executive branch. This is an issue fundamental to our democracy and I beseech my colleagues to not let the non-elected government over-ride our elected House of Commons.

Regardless of political party, we must continue the fight of the first Parliament of 1213. We must protect Parliament from the tyranny of an autocratic government; otherwise, the Canadian parliamentary system has no future.

We would do well to realize that the only source of legitimacy the parliamentary system has left in the public eye lies in the democratic processes of this House. If the House Leader can change the rules to his political advantage this House would no longer be parliamentary and he would have tampered with one of Canada's most fundamental institutions.

I say do not allow this government to force the public to lose their confidence in our parliamentary system.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Manicouagan):** Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege today to take a few minutes in the House to comment on the project submitted by the government to change the hours of sitting and work schedules of the House. I would also like to give you and the House the viewpoint of a member who represents a riding that is very far from Ottawa and also very large; it extends over nearly 750 miles of shoreline on the north side of the Gulf of St. Lawrence; it contains three large communities—Port Cartier, Sept Îles and Havre Saint-Pierre—within a distance of about 150 miles and 20 or so villages, some with fewer than 500 people, on another 550 miles of coast.