

now, we had to seek unanimous consent to change the rules at will, virtually.

Sometimes, and as a matter of fact often, it was to the benefit of the House that we alter a rule for a particular afternoon or we change a way of doing business to facilitate a piece of legislation or to assist members in the performance of their duties. The government has changed that. What unanimous consent means is unanimous all but 25 members, so that during Routine Proceedings the government can introduce a motion to pass a bill at all stages or to change the Constitution or to carry out all sorts of what could be termed Draconian changes. Unless 25 members leap to their feet immediately, it is done, just like that. It can be used and abused so easily, but again it will enable the government to facilitate introducing its political agenda through the House of Commons.

• (1810)

I know the government always says: "We have to become more efficient. We have to become more effective". It was very frustrated when the opposition spoke against the goods and services tax and tried to point out why this was the wrong tax. The government was very frustrated when we spoke out against the major changes to the unemployment insurance legislation that would do irreparable harm to families, particularly in the regions of the country. The government was frustrated when we spoke out against the free trade agreement. It said we take too much time talking in the House of Commons.

We appreciate that democracy is not always the most efficient way of doing business. The parliamentary system is not the most effective and efficient way of conducting government business. The most effective way is a dictatorship. That is the most effective way. That is the most business-like way; simply impose the legislation and Parliament is nothing but a rubber stamp if it exists at all.

That is why some of us have felt so strongly about these changes, because that is the direction in which we are moving, where the government simply says: "Here is our agenda". There will be no vote at first reading of a bill. We are going to pass this in principle and put it into a legislative committee where we cannot take time to discuss the bill in any sort of depth. We can only discuss technical aspects.

### *Government Orders*

Mr. Speaker, that would mean that the GST legislation would be introduced, sent off to a committee and unless you were a tax accountant or a tax lawyer, you would not be welcome. You could not call witnesses to say how is this going to affect the farm community, the fishing community; how this is going to affect various sectors of the economy or other elements of society. Oh, no, Mr. Speaker, you could not talk about that. You have to talk about specific details of the legislation.

This is something that we do not support. We think this is wrong. What it means is that rather than the people of Canada, through their organizations, groups or individuals having input into legislation, lobbyists will have input into legislation. They will be the ones who are able to advise the government members and their officials. The people of Canada will be frozen out of the process. That is one of the many reasons why we say we cannot support this package.

The government House leader said that we consented in some way to these rule changes, that he felt that somehow we had agreed during the process that these were acceptable. I think my hon. friend who spoke on behalf of the Official Opposition indicated that that was not the case. It is a bit like being sentenced to death and saying: "Let us negotiate how this is done". We could determine that it could be done by hanging, it could be done by injection or there are a variety of ways to do this.

That is essentially what happened. The government said: "Here are all the changes we want to make so that this place will be more effective, more efficient and more business-like", to run more like a corporate boardroom as opposed to a parliamentary democracy. We said: "We cannot accept these". There are some changes that we can accept. There are some that are rather trivial and simply reflect a changing House of Commons, but there are some measures that we simply cannot accept.

For example, supply days are one of the most important aspects of our work here. Supply days go back to when the king wanted money, he had to set aside certain days to discuss on the part of the duly elected people whether this was an appropriate expenditure or not. We have those days. We have 25 of those each year. We are required to have at least 25 days where the government schedules a day for debate on whether the government is using taxpayers' money adequately and whether their plans are appropriate in terms of more expenditures.