

Government Orders

Of course, with those credentials, thousands of Canadians may say: "The devil with it, throw the lot of them out, the politicians and the lawyers." I am sure that no one here wants to discard the rules.

[Translation]

Of course, the opposition wants to discard these changes. The Liberals have proposed throwing out twenty one of these negotiated changes. The socialists over there on the left had many more that they wanted to throw out, and I say *wanted*, the past tense, Mr. Speaker, all, after negotiating and discussing and nodding and agreeing.

[English]

The only reason the NDP were late with their proposed throw-aways was because their House leader, the hon. member for Kamloops, forgot when he was supposed to make the amendment.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I really feel sorry for him because it is very embarrassing. Now, if he would agree to this package of changes, perhaps the simplified rules would be easier to understand and remember. We all know, Mr. Speaker, that memory begins to fade as we grow older. I know that the Minister of Justice finds the hon. member for Kamloops very young, but one would not know that, judging by his memory.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, while we are on a roll and while we are moving quickly, I look forward to a resolution of this debate and the adoption of these simple, rational rule changes. Why don't we agree to begin work on the next package of rule changes? The next package could be looked at in the coming weeks and discussed and negotiated and tinkered with and we could adopt them by the end of June.

Perhaps 18 months was too long for discussion and negotiation, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps that was too much like the 19th century. Let us be realistic. We are now eight and a half years away from the 21st century. Maybe we can speed this up a little and modernize even more in the next six weeks.

Mr. Speaker, let me give the House another example of one of the proposed changes. This proposed change, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the use of television. We all know that the majority of Canadians absorb news solely from television and not from newspapers, radio, maga-

zines or even gossip—they rely on television. TV, whether we like it or not, is the major dispenser of news and information in our modern age.

[English]

The best way for Canadians to watch and judge their legislators is to watch the proceedings on television. Not many persons may watch the House of Commons debates.

Mr. Butland: Not right now. They would be making a mistake now.

Mr. Danis: Perhaps people prefer programs such as *Watching a Flower Grow*. Some may say that watching the House of Commons is preferable to hot needles placed under finger nails. At least we can give people the opportunity to choose for themselves whether they want to watch the House or not.

[Translation]

One of the proposed changes, Mr. Speaker, Number 56 of this motion, proposes adding a new rule to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. It reads:

56. That the following new Standing Order be added after Standing Order 119:

119.1(1) Any committee wishing to use the facilities of the House of Commons for the broadcasting of its meetings shall first obtain the consent of the House.

(2) The Standing Committee on House Management shall establish, by report to the House of Commons, experimental guidelines governing the broadcasting of committee meetings. After concurrence by the House in such a report, any committee may permit the presence of the electronic media at its meetings, subject to the said guidelines.

Mr. Speaker, this proposed rule would broaden the reforms of the House begun by the McGrath Committee in 1985. Members of the House of Commons who work hard in committees deserve the chance to be seen and heard by their electors. It is often a criticism of this House that at any one time only 10 to 20 members may be there during a debate on a bill.

At that same time, however, there may be as many as seven Standing committees meeting on Parliament Hill. These committees of from 8 to 15 members hear witnesses—ordinary Canadians with a point of view. They could be analyzing and discussing policies which impact on all Canadians; they could be planning for future legislation; and they could be questioning bureaucrats and senior officials on details of the operation of government. This is a major and vital part of the duties of a member of Parliament.