

Standing Orders

We used dilatory motions. I will admit that we used some of the same tricks ourselves when I was in opposition, and I was ashamed.

Mr. Gauthier: You wrote the book.

Mr. Fennell: I was ashamed of some of the tricks.

Mr. Manly: You should be ashamed of what you are doing now.

Mr. Fennell: That is the reason we changed the rules. We changed the rules so that we could work and manage this House and manage the affairs of the nation effectively. That is precisely the reason we did it. It is important to Canada to have a responsible Government. We came in with a majority and we should use it. The people of Canada said that they want us to rule the country as it has never been ruled before. The economy has never been better. We promised the Canadian public that we would create jobs. We have created 800,000-plus jobs.

Mr. Robinson: In Ontario!

Mr. Fennell: We promised the Canadian public that we would lower interest rates. Interest rates went down.

What I am saying is that we are fighting for the Canadian public, not for the individuals who sit on the other side of this House.

One thing Members opposite have put more emphasis on than anything else is the fact that in this motion they might have to sit—might—into the month of July. The motion does not state that we will sit. It leaves the option—

Mr. Manly: Where were you last September?

Mr. Fennell: I was down here.

If there is an important piece of legislation, we can deal with it here during the summer months and not have the nation shut out from dealing with important legislation. It is only a stall on the part of Members opposite. If they really want to stall, they can stall themselves into July very easily.

With respect to the petitions that are presented day after day—

Mr. Manly: The right of the people!

Mr. Fennell: They have to work hard to get that many petitions. One has to work extremely hard to get that many petitions, or else get one's workers to work very hard. One has to go around to canvass people from door to door.

Mr. Manly: People have the right to be heard.

Mr. Fennell: I am not against petitions. I am against the misuse of the time of the House of Commons.

Many things that have been agreed to in this motion are very important. The details with respect to Fridays are very

important. I do not recognize many of the people from the NDP who are ever here on Friday. Perhaps one Member from—

Mr. Manly: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not think it is parliamentary for the Hon. Member to refer to the presence or absence of Members of any particular Party on any given day. It is absolutely certain that New Democrats are here on Fridays every bit as much as other Members are, while others are travelling to their ridings.

Mr. Fennell: I am not arguing about members of the NDP, the Liberals or the Conservatives. I happen to have been a Member of the House for eight years and I have always sat on Fridays. That was my—

Mr. Gauthier: Duty day.

Mr. Fennell: That was not my choice, that is what was imposed upon me. I got to enjoy Fridays. As my colleague, the Whip of the Official Opposition, understands, we used to have an interesting time on Fridays. We always had a chance for debate. It is a great day.

Let me refer to the shortening of the hours on Friday. The hours are not being reduced. They are being changed so that we would sit through lunch. We will still sit five hours. However, instead of sitting from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. we will sit from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. That is something that was approved by all Members of the House as a result of a petition carried out by one of my colleagues. So it is a good idea.

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): No one objected to that.

Mr. Fennell: We dealt with cleaning up situations with respect to Private Members' Bills. For instance, why should the mover of a Private Members' Bill not have the opportunity to talk for a longer period of time than everyone else? He is the man who wrote the Bill. This is just cleaning up some errors that were in the original rules. It will allow the mover of the motion or Bill to start with 20 minutes and everybody else to follow with 10. I think that is equitable.

I would now like to talk about Opposition Days. I know that it has been a hardship for members of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party during the past month in which we have jammed in 13 Opposition Days all at once in this supply period. What we have tried to do is to allocate the days so that they are more evenly spread out over the year. Instead of 13 days there will be 10. I think that makes sense. It is hard when members of the Opposition have to prepare for Opposition Days day after day after day. It is hard to get speakers and to get the right material together and to be aware.

There is a change in the rules with respect to allowing the Whips to change the membership on legislative and special committees. I would like to talk about committees because I have very firm views on them. During the discussions I did not change my views with respect to this issue, and I think that the Opposition Whip will accept that. However, I feel that it is an