

*Government Orders*

This is broad and powerful and in effect will remove any leverage—I guess that is the word to use—that individual members will have unless they can get 25 members to come up and say no. With this power in the hands of a government, a government is going to be able to get through its business in an unholy fast fashion.

There was a suggestion from the government House leader in his introductory remarks: “Oh, well, don’t worry about this, members of the House of Commons. This can only be moved in Routine Proceedings and if someone says no it has to come back to Routine Proceedings”.

Mr. Speaker, you and I know how this place works. I see you indicating that I have to conclude, and I will conclude. You can try Routine Proceedings on a Monday morning when not too many people are here, and then someone may say no to the motion. A motion can be broad. It could affect the workings of committees, special committees, the Meech Lake committee, any committee you want, and you may get a no because one member may feel very strongly about it.

I appreciate from a government point of view that there has been an abuse of no, perhaps because there are a lot of Independents in this House and there were a couple of times recently where no was given. You say no once and, when the person who said no leaves the Chamber, the government House leader can quite properly request unanimous consent to revert to Routine Proceedings. Then there will be consent and you get back to Routine Proceedings, as the order says, and you can move the motion to do anything. With this provision and without 25 members on guard all the time, you could put a GST bill through this House in less than two or three days, et cetera.

It is for that reason alone that I wish there was focus from the opposition. I am glad that members are debating this matter. It is the most invidious projected rule in this whole package as far as I am concerned. I think it will have a large adverse affect. Quite frankly it is basically and totally against the McGrath report which was for private members. As other members have said, it totally eliminates any power or authority of individual members. I am horrified that the Liberal amendment did

not include it in its deletion. I really think this and this alone—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I regret the hon. member’s time has expired.

**Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Mr. Speaker, I always like to hear from the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants. He has been a great contributor to the parliamentary system for many years. I am proud to be able to say that he is a fellow Nova Scotian. He has represented the people in his area and the people in the rest of the province of Nova Scotia well over the years.

He certainly knows this place, I guess better than I because I am a newcomer here. I guess I share some of the frustrations that are evident many times when he gets up to speak in this place. There is a great frustration that I feel. I want to share it with him, and perhaps he can comment.

The people back in my riding in the great city of Dartmouth, which is not that far from the riding of the hon. member, are getting pretty fed up as well with the way that this place works. The hon. member made a comment that the television camera does not lie. I think that has been a great change in how people perceive this place.

It is fine for us to be debating here. It is important that we get a chance to debate these rule changes because they are important rule changes. They certainly do impact on the ability of individual members of Parliament to participate and represent their constituents in this place, the highest court of the land.

The hon. member raised one particular instance about the provision for unanimous consent, the change that that will mean in this place, and the potential abuse of that by a majority, by a government. As an individual member of Parliament I feel, as do my constituents many times, that this place is becoming increasingly irrelevant.

I know we are debating rules and changes to the rules and how they will affect the business of this House. I wonder how some of these rule changes will affect the respectability this place has lost, whether or not we can gain it back, and whether or not it really is making us even more irrelevant as individual members of Parliament.