

realize is that the process of getting legislation through, the process of even getting some of the Bills on the Order Paper, has been at times frustrated by members of the Opposition, even at first reading.

Would the Member not agree that the motion before us would facilitate at least getting an orderly part of the Government's business onto the floor of the House of Commons in the way which is envisaged in the motion before us?

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, what I do not want to be drawn into, and I appreciate the legitimacy of the intent behind the Hon. Member's question, is a discussion on what the House Leaders and various Members interested in parliamentary reform have been doing for many months and years, and are still doing today. All I can say in response to the Hon. Member's legitimate question is that just in the last little while we have passed many Bills. Many Bills have been introduced into this House. I am holding only a small portion. Every single one, with the exception of one, has been introduced with no difficulty whatsoever. With respect to one single Bill out of hundreds, there was a couple of days before the Government could introduce it.

In the tradition of Parliament, which recognizes the rule of an Opposition by its very definition of being "Parliament", and recognizing the role of the opposition Parties to focus attention on Bills they have deemed not to be in the best interests of Canada, to have focused their attention on one single Bill out of perhaps hundreds for a few days, is that inappropriate? By his question I suspect he is saying it is. As a parliamentarian, I say that it is not inappropriate.

If the Opposition had been holding up every single Bill, or the vast majority of Bills the Government was attempting to introduce, then I would say, yes, they have a point. However, one single Bill out of so many was, if you like, slowed down for a few days. It has been subsequently introduced, went through all stages and was passed. It is signed, sealed and delivered. That is the way Parliaments are supposed to function. I think what the Hon. Member is saying to me is that if he had his way there ought to be no Opposition, just a Government, so it can do things in the fastest and most efficient way possible. That might work for some countries, and they need not be named, countries which only believe in doing government work in the most efficient fashion and having no opposition whatsoever, certainly not an opposition with any power. That is a tradition, of course, that this country has never accepted, and I hope it never will.

• (1550)

Mr. Scott Fennell (Ontario): Madam Speaker, I would like to start off by saying that the Hon. Member doth protest too much. With respect to the Hon. Member who just spoke, it is interesting to note that over the past two weeks there were continual meetings regarding the change in the rules. However, the Hon. Member was only here for one of those meetings.

Standing Orders

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am surprised at the insensitivity and the unparliamentary nature of the language of my hon. colleague. He well knows the traditions of Parliament. An Hon. Member does not refer to the absence of another Hon. Member. The implication is that Members of Parliament are always carrying out their responsibilities and duties in a responsible and honourable way. For the Hon. Member to attack someone on a personal level obviously indicates that the substance of his argument is extremely weak.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I am sure that the Hon. Member for Ontario (Mr. Fennell) will be a little more careful in his remarks.

Mr. Fennell: Madam Speaker, I was not referring to the Hon. Member's location, to his absence from Ottawa or to what he was doing. I was not referring to that. I was only talking about meetings.

I would like to make a point with respect to the bell-ringing episode to which the Hon. Member referred so much in his speech. The Hon. Member will recall that this was a very important incident in parliamentary history. It had to do with an omnibus Bill being imposed upon Parliament, something that had never happened before. The bell-ringing episode, much and all as it was regrettable, brought a stop to that practice. So the bell-ringing is important because it allowed us to stop that omnibus Bill. It was eight weeks that we spent down in the basement of this building trying to work out the details of the broken up portion of the National Energy Program that, as Hon. Members know, and as the western group that got together in Vancouver was quoted in *The Globe and Mail* today as saying, it was one of the things that really hurt the West.

Mr. Manly: That's not why they're getting together in 1987.

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): What about Bill C-22 and its effects?

Mr. Fennell: Bill C-22 happens to be very popular legislation in my riding. I have not heard one argument against it. I have heard many arguments for it. Members opposite can yell about it all they want, but in my riding it is very popular. At last there is some research going on in my riding that was not going on before. There are millions of dollars being spent. Lilly and Anca and two others are all spending millions of dollars on research. That helps Canadians. It stops the brain-drain from Canada.

Mr. Manly: The price of drugs is going up!

Mr. Fennell: This is something which is terribly important. However, we are not talking about Bill C-22. We are talking about the importance of administration in the House of Commons.