

entitled as an efficient democratic body to introduce and receive passage of that legislation?

West Germany sits on the average of 17 days a year. It passes 90 per cent of its legislation. Japan sits 43 days a year and passes 76 per cent of its bills. Even the United States, which has a little bit of a problem of geography and population, sits only 144 days a year and passes the majority of its legislation.

It is a little bit of a ruse to say that by reducing the number of days we sit so that we can spend time in our constituencies but increasing the number of hours in the days we sit so that we maintain the same amount of time in the chamber, is somehow a reduction in democracy.

I want to make one other point and that has to do with Question Period. If members opposite are interested in improving the efficiency of Question Period, I would simply point out to them that they have the same bothersome, meddlesome worries I had when I sat over there: The prima donnas who sit on the front benches hog all the camera time.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Friesen:** I have their attention, Mr. Speaker. The man who is best at it is laughing. When you have members sitting in the front and asking questions that take two and three minutes, that inspire answers that are just as long, two or three minutes, give me a break, you cannot have many questions answered in a 45 minute question period. What each caucus needs to do is put the boots to those guys who hog the camera and the time, limit them and get rid of the speeches and ask short, pertinent questions that require short, pertinent answers. We will improve Question Period far more than adding a few days of Question Period to the calendar of the House of Commons.

I invite each caucus, including ours, to do that, then we will improve the procedure of the House of Commons.

Third, I want to talk about committees. Can I speak as long as the opposition House leader did? The third point I want to make is regarding committees. It is important that we start invoking the principle of approval in principle in the House and make committees do the work of technical improvement of the bills.

### *Government Orders*

I remember when we were debating C-55 and C-84. We had an immigration lawyer before us who opposed the bill. He was not in favour of the bill. He came before the committee, not to say withdraw the bill. He said: "You have improved it in principle, now here are ways I think that you can improve it". That is what we need to do.

**Mr. Heap:** And you ignored him.

**Mr. Friesen:** We did not. My friend from Spadina said we ignored him. No, we did not. As a matter of fact, he gave us very good consultative advice that we used.

I am sorry I do not have as much time as the opposition House leader. I know the members of the opposition would love to hear me speak longer, but I heed your advice.

**Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, speaking for this side of the House, the only ruse in this place is the one being regurgitated by the government here tonight and being roasted by us on this side.

The hon. member speaks well of reality if the reality was that this was the year 1969, because today, in 1991, we have had advancements in communications and the tools of communication, the likes of which this member has not seen in 15 to 20 years. We have the parliamentary reports which we can put out quarterly. Every three months you can send one out. We have access to distribute information in lots of 4,000 pieces, as many times a week as you care to. We have free mailing privileges that go out to all your constituents in your riding.

**Mr. Gagliano:** Community television.

**Mr. Friesen:** Community television, the Whip for the opposition party states. Community television where you can go and take a member of the government if you want to, if he or she is obliging, and go across the street to a cable organization, sit down with that person, spend 28 minutes discussing the issues of the day and mail it to your riding. Free mailing privileges and telephone privileges. If someone calls or someone expresses a problem to your constituency, you can get on that phone immediately from your constituency office and call that constituent back immediately.