

Government Orders

three committees have traditionally been chaired by the opposition.

I do not doubt the government's intention here. I suspect that it will hold to the convention that the opposition members will have the chair of these three committees. I would hope they would. I am worried because one of the committees, Management and Members' Services, is in an envelope and it kind of disappears within the management committee of the House. Therefore, I would like to ask publicly if the government intends to change this long-standing practice of appointing a member of the opposition as chair of those three traditional standing committees. There is no rule that says we have to act that way, but there is a convention, a practice, that has been with us for a long time. I would hope that they will continue this practice.

• (1600)

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to address the House on what is obviously a very important subject to all members of Parliament.

I represent the constituency of Crowfoot. One of the rules that is recommended for change is that members would be serving in the House of Commons for a period of about three weeks, and then would have a week to receive constituency representations.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at my constituency, I see that my riding is larger than 33 nations in the world. Within my constituency are 113 individual communities and therefore when I am at one of them, there are 112 at which I am not. It should be obvious that that rule, bearing in mind that mine is far from the largest constituency in the country, if Parliament is to work, if we are to represent the people, we must be available to hear the views of our constituents in order to come here to place those views before Parliament.

I was in the House of Commons when the hon. member for Skeena made the comment that he had no difficulty in going home every weekend. For those persons who do not know where that member's riding is, he would have to fly to Vancouver, and I am not sure of the route today, but he would either fly north to Prince George, and then from Prince George into Prince Rupert and, not knowing where he lives, would probably have a car drive thereafter.

It may well be that this hon. member can travel some 12 or 14 hours and attend, as he said, some six meetings on a weekend. It may be that he, with his pectorals rippling, his latissimus dorsi all bulked up, crawling with power, and his deltoids and his triceps and his biceps all bulging and knotted masses of muscles, hardened, and going with his tight T-shirt on with a big S on it, is more powerful than a locomotive and faster than a speeding bullet and that big S stands for super-Skeena.

Everybody will not be like that member. Everybody will not be super-Skeena. I remember the predecessor to the hon. member for Skeena, the Hon. Iona Campagnolo. I sat beside her on the plane once, shortly after she was appointed to the cabinet. She went home every weekend. She lamented the almost five-hour flight to Vancouver, waiting, then getting on the flight to Prince George, waiting, taking a small plane to Prince Rupert, and having a two-hour car drive to get home. She went home every weekend. However, she lamented how difficult and how hard it was on her.

Let us suppose that the hon. member for Skeena can go home every weekend. Let us suppose that no one cares about our physical condition when we do arrive. Is it not legitimate to ask the question: what about a Chamber of Commerce that meets, perhaps, every Wednesday, or a Rotary Club that meets every Tuesday, or an organization of professional women that meets every Thursday. If we go home on weekends, do we presume that everyone in our constituencies who invites us to address them or to make representations or to listen to hearings has to schedule the country within a Saturday and a Sunday time frame?

What about those persons who are somehow going to be elected to Parliament? Are they to go home every weekend and to have six or seven meetings as the member for Skeena attests, and then never once have an opportunity for some co-existence with their families? Yet, to be able to come down here and as one of the policies of an institution, to support Parliament and its move to help and assist and strengthen the families when, in fact, they are detracted from them by the very demands of the job. My constituency is large, but is not nearly as large as the Western Arctic or Eastern Arctic. It is not nearly as large as two other constituencies in my home province of Alberta or as large as most of the