

*Government Orders*

I for one, coming from the east, can certainly empathize and I think support the suggestion, admitting that there are less days of debate, of three weeks on and one week off. It has been kicked around for years and years in all procedure committees I have been exposed to. I think it is a very constructive idea.

I am not going to get involved in a personal way with other members who have made their comments, but it is very easy if you are sitting in the central part of Canada to get back to your ridings. I have a pretty good flight now, but it used to take eight hours and ten minutes, always trans-planing in Montreal, the old Viscount Vikings, to get back east. Then the worst part was the drive on the old No. 1 Highway. Parts of it are still left, and I wonder how I ever drove on it for first five or six years until the highway was improved. Fortunately the air service has also improved.

We in the east have it relatively easy with direct flights, two in the morning and two at night, direct if you catch the right plane to Halifax and direct return. This has made a tremendous difference in terms of travel.

I still say that it is not just the mechanical paper ways we communicate with our constituents. I still think it is going to be a heck of a lot better if members get back in their ridings and talk to the people there.

I would venture to say that I think it is worth the experiment to try to put it in place. Perhaps members will come back and be a little more realistic and not quite as partisan after they have been with their people and find out that the public are sick and tired of rank partisanship day in and day out, especially on some of the larger issues which affect this country.

I think that is very constructive. Yes, it is going to change some of the time of debate in this House. The problem, I confess in sadness, is that very few people pay any attention to debates in the House anyway. Perhaps to shorten time, where we will have to have a better focus, will perhaps rehabilitate this forum which has to be the conscience of the land with all the problems the land has today.

There is no doubt there has been a deterioration. I don't think it is because I am getting older and was more impressed when I was younger. I think it is there and perhaps there should be some change in the rules. The

rules are not going to do it by themselves, at all, no matter what we do. I have heard all the stories about the rape. This Parliament will survive.

A funny thing happened on the way to the circus. I say this to my friends in the opposition. The polls are bad for the government. They are horrible. They have never been worse. I am not going to get too political, but some leaders in the land say: "We will come out of this because we have been in this valley of travail before". The Tory party has never been at rock bottom. Perhaps this is the time. I give full credit to the government for trying to bring in some rules. If things are so horrible, perhaps some members on the opposition side will be in government benches and have an expedited procedure and process to get government laws through. If these things are as horrible as some members have said, certainly the new government of the day can bring in its own rule changes. These things aren't in stone forever.

I can say to the member for Kingston and the Islands because he was not around then that this is one of the reasons the McGrath report found favour with all sides of the House. At that time when no one party was way down at rock bottom, all parties were of a pretty shaky nature. There were times when each of the three main line parties thought they were going to be in government in the 1980 period.

I say to my friends in the opposition who use the general broad brush of rape of Parliament on everything in the package that they may be in the reins of power themselves and they may want some of these expeditious moves. If they are not working or are not going to work, they are going to be in a position to change them.

• (1550)

I am not going to go through them all because time is moving on, but I want to talk about television. I think that is one of the reasons this place has gone down the pike, although I agree with my friend from Crowfoot that modern television technology is there. I was on the committee that studied it in opposition. We did all our studies then and felt why should our constituents have to pay money to come to Ottawa to see the place in action when they can tune in the TV tube and see it in a certain way in homes. We have to recognize modern technology, but it definitely has affected this place.