

*Government Orders*

sure that the legislative program that they introduce as a government follows their party manifesto.

Now that is the first step of democracy.

**Mr. Fisher:** So when are you going to start using it?

**Mr. Friesen:** I will come to that.

**Mr. Fisher:** Never.

**Mr. Friesen:** If we allow campaigning, as we have in the past, to be nothing but sloganeering, like "the land is strong" or "zap, you are frozen", if slogans which have very little to do with your legislative program once you are elected dominate your campaign, you will diminish the level of democracy right at the threshold where it ought to begin. When we diminish it there, naturally when we get into the Chamber here we have a free rein. If there is no structure in the campaign it is no wonder then that when you get to the Chamber opposition parties will object to the program that the government is presenting; it has had no forerunner, it has had no foundation.

Democracy begins on the campaign trail, and then it is developed here in, as someone said, "the crucible of democracy".

Therefore, to reduce the number of sitting days but lengthen the hours so that you have an aggregate number of increased hours is not a reduction of democracy. That is making democracy work.

I remember in the campaign of 1984 our party very clearly talked about wanting to dismantle the national energy program, and yet as soon as we were elected and we started doing that we were opposed. I mean, this is something we promised to do and yet the opposition said "you don't have a right to do what you promised to do".

Then we proposed, during the election campaign, privatization of the government corporations and the opposition said "no, no, you can't do that", but we had promised to do it.

It seems to me that is what an election campaign is all about. I come back to the United Kingdom experience. There is a saying over there among the two or three opposing parties—whatever the year happens to be—that the government is entitled to its legislation. It does,

it gets it as it ought to. The opposition is entitled to debate what it sees as the flaws of that concept, of that ideology. That is true. That is the opposition's right and it ought to be exercised.

• (1840)

In the United Kingdom—and my friend from Newfoundland walks out—they debate an issue like that for five, six or seven not weeks, not days, but hours for a bill of some magnitude. They have concluded that if the government has campaigned on a platform and it was elected to introduce its platform and to legislate it into being, it is entitled to do that.

I remember sitting here for hours at night debating a bill on which we had campaigned, and we were being told withdraw the bill after we had campaigned on it. Somehow that to me sounds like a contradiction to democracy.

In the 1984 campaign we had over 50 per cent of the vote. Presumably we had a right to do it. That did not stop the opposition. Now the leader of the government says 53 per cent voted against us in the 1988 campaign. Well I do not remember any time when the Liberals were elected when they had 50 per cent of the vote. That did not stop them from introducing their election campaign platform, their legislation. They did what they wanted even though they had less than 50 per cent of the vote.

I want to point out that the beginning of democracy having a clearly defined campaign, that the crucible of democracy is here and we are entitled to legislate the campaign promises that we introduced and we go on from there.

I would like to underline another concept and that is the myth that by reducing the number of days we are introducing a radical new reduction of democracy when, as the government House leader pointed out this morning, Australia with a geography somewhat problematic to them, like we have here, has 66 sitting days a year. It passes 89 per cent of the bills introduced. Canada sits 155 days, two and a half times as long, and passes 56 per cent of the bills introduced.

I am asking members opposite: is that an efficient use of parliamentary time? If we have campaigned on a platform and the legislation flows from it, are we not