

this country. There are people who wait for these answers. Perhaps that extra few minutes will not be necessary on every occasion.

There is another point that arises. There are limitations on debates in the House. In addition, restrictions are imposed on members in committees in the sense that in some committees members are not permitted to ask questions which they were unable to ask in the House. In some committees, there is a rule that unless you are a member of the committee, you cannot ask a question until the questions of committee members have been exhausted. Some members are practical jokers. They continually ask questions and thereby frustrate other members. If you cannot ask a question in the House or in committee within a certain time, the question may become unnecessary. After a month has elapsed, there is no point in asking the question. It is no longer urgent. That is an added frustration for many members.

With regard to starred questions, I think there should be a limit of three or four days or a week in which they must be answered. I think that would facilitate their use. At the same time, possibly one supplementary question should be allowed when a starred question is answered. This is not always necessary, but it would be very useful on certain occasions.

Mr. Howie: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Lundrigan) upon demonstrating the courage to raise this problem which concerns all members in the back benches. Your Honour will notice that there are a lot of questions on the order paper. I think there are nearly 1,000. These are being answered at the rate of 20 a week. A lot of questions asked during the oral question period do not really pass the test of relevancy or urgency, although Your Honour generously allows us to ask them. If there were more efficiency and promptness in answering questions on the order paper, there would be a lot less questions asked in the question period.

If we are going to be a good opposition, we need information in order to deal effectively with the budget debate that will commence next week. Many of our speeches will contain irrelevancies because we have not been given accurate information quickly enough by the government. I am not saying this is by design, but some questions have been on the order paper since January 4. A good opposition cannot tolerate that kind of thing and, therefore, it is necessary for us to ask questions during the oral question period. Some members have been forced to resort to other methods because they cannot get recognized during the question period. Because they cannot get recognized, they rise daily under Standing Order 43 and Standing Order 26.

I hope that as a result of Your Honour's long experience here, and the great respect we all hold for you, that you can give some guidance to us as to how we can solve this problem. Our purpose is to be good members and to represent our constituents well. We find we are having difficulty doing this.

Mr. Wise: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not rise to continue the lecture. However, I am one of the backbenchers who was overlooked during the question

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period. My concern arises from the fact that I did not have the opportunity to lend some support to my colleagues, the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt) and the hon. member for Norfolk-Haldimand (Mr. Knowles), who pointed out to the government, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), members of the cabinet and other members of the government the very serious erosion situation on the north shore of Lake Erie.

I see that the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Dubé) has left the chamber. I am happy to see that the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Davis) is here. Perhaps Your Honour will allow me to say that I hope the Minister of the Environment, in keeping with his past record, will show interest and leadership in this problem and will ask for the participation of the provincial authorities to at least commission a study as to the course of action most suitable to correct this situation. I want to go on record as pointing out the necessity of solving this great problem and supporting my two colleagues, the hon. member for Oxford and the hon. member for Norfolk-Haldimand.

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, I could not resist the temptation and shall say a few words on the opinions expressed. I know that all political parties have put forward their arguments. I believe that there remains an important point which was not dealt with. The hon. members active within their parties have been mentioned, but not those who had enough courage to seek election outside the framework of a political party. Mr. Speaker, you know, indeed, to what I am now referring.

Nevertheless, I should like to note that whatever amendments might be brought in, in my opinion, a great wisdom accompanied those remarks, and since I shall definitely not be invited to the committee on procedure and organization to discuss the matter, I should like to indicate to hon. members from the various parties that should they introduce a measure requiring unanimous consent of the House, I would deem it important that they send me a copy of the draft. I shall certainly not agree to any measure without previous consultation.

In any event, and as usual, I feel confident that Your Honour will continue to keep me in mind during the oral question period, because I aim at a positive contribution in the House.

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[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wish to ask the government House leader what business he proposes to place before parliament tomorrow, Monday afternoon and Tuesday, on the assumption that the House will have dealt with the supply bill.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member for Malpeque (Mr. MacLean), following the completion of the appropriation bill, I would like the House to return to the debate on the amendments to the Criminal Code, Bill C-2. If this is not completed, we can probably