

*Proposal for Time Allocation*

two sessions crowded into one, according to the order paper, and there are other pieces of legislation still to come forward. I am not counting appropriation bills which follow supply. It is a good achievement. No one can complain that we have been holding things up. If you want to take it on the average, that is only about two days per bill.

• (8:20 p.m.)

Time and time again we have passed three small, minor or unimportant bills in this house in one day. Obviously a complex bill requires more debate. In any event the record of this house, so far as passing measures is concerned, has been good. The minute the government conceives the idea that it should force something through the house it begins to refer to allocation of time and closure. Government members begin to complain about the opposition talking about certain measures. Much of the difficulty experienced by the government in this regard could be avoided by agreement and I gave two examples before six o'clock. I am sure, for example, we might have used Tuesday and Wednesday of this week for the consideration of other legislation. I made a suggestion to the house in this regard on Tuesday, but it was rejected.

Before six o'clock I suggested that we could end this session promptly by postponing our consideration of certain parts of this bill until the next session. In this way we could pass the remainder of the bill, complete our consideration of the measure on adult training, pass interim supply and deal with the report of the rules committee. Before six o'clock I went so far as to suggest that this could all be done by tomorrow. But the government is inflexible and is bound to force its will on this House of Commons by closure.

The government does not have the support of the country on this matter of unification, because it was not a subject for discussion during the last election. There has been no mandate forthcoming from the people in respect of the destruction of the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Canadian Army or the Royal Canadian Air Force. Unification was not a plank in the platform of the Liberal party during the election of 1965. This whole matter has been brought on since then by the Minister of National Defence, and against the advice of his senior officials he intends to push it through. That is why we maintain our right to present our case now.

Not everything that should and will be said about this measure has been said, and it is

[Mr. Churchill.]

ridiculous to suggest, as the leader of the New Democratic party suggested, that the discussion on the bill has been exhausted. That hon. gentleman has not participated in the debate. I do not believe he has read the evidence of the committee or that he knows anything about this matter. In spite of that he says everything of value has been said. How does he know that? I have more to say about this measure, and I am sure others have contributions of value to make.

We in this House of Commons are constantly faced with this sort of situation. Some people want to curtail freedom of speech. Surely that is unnecessary. Year after year this house has passed important items. There have always been certain things which must be done. There has always been a great pressure to accomplish certain things of importance, and over the years we have restricted the amount of time for debate on certain matters such as the throne speech debate, the budget debate, supply motions and estimates. These restrictions have all been put in as a result of agreement. We have cut down on the time allotted for speeches during the committee of the whole house stage, and we have limited our question period. There may be other limitations we will have to bring about in order to facilitate the business of this house, but surely these limitations can be imposed by agreement rather than by arbitrary action on the part of the government. Surely these limitations should not be made by government ukases.

A few years ago changes of the kind I have mentioned were made as a result of the unanimous agreement of an all-party committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Speaker. Such changes were made under the chairmanship of Mr. Speaker Beaudoin and Mr. Speaker Michener. That is how things were done a few years ago. Useful and helpful compromises were reached. In contrast, under this autocratic government the house is being forced to restrict its freedoms.

To my knowledge five members of the cabinet have been telling the public outside this house how parliament must be reformed so that its work may be expedited. They have told the public that things should be done in a different way. I hope the public will realize that it is the government's intention to muzzle the opposition. All we in the opposition want is to debate government proposals. On the other hand the government wants to present its legislation to a completely silent opposition, which will act as a rubber stamp.