

the desired amendment for him. That seems to me to be the kind of thing which might be regarded as unnecessary at this time, when we have very serious matters to consider.

Then there is the question of a possible change in the hours of sitting. I am not at all sure that I would wish to see the hours changed in many particulars. I think, however, that if we followed the practice on Friday of meeting in the morning and adjourning at six, instead of meeting at three in the afternoon and sitting until eleven usually with a slim house in the evening, that procedure might help to expedite the business of the house to have it attended to more thoroughly and also serve the greater convenience of hon. members. That is a good example of the kind of question that might be considered.

Again, there might be a standing order to curtail protracted debates. There are certain statutes concerning the business of the house that might be improved. A suggestion has been made that there are sections of the Senate and House of Commons Act with respect to the leader of the opposition and some of his perquisites or prerogatives—

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I hope you are not thinking of curtailing them.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: —which might be looked into with advantage, I believe to him. There are some sections in the act that are now anomalous or obsolete that might be improved. The clerks of the house and of the senate, and the law clerks, might prepare possible improvements for submission to the government.

That is the presentation as I made it to my colleagues, and I wish to assure my hon. friend that there is no subtle device or aught that is at all devious behind anything that I have put forward or ulterior motive behind the resolution as a whole.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I am obliged to the Prime Minister for having acceded to my request and given the house the concrete ideas he has in view. To some of these suggestions I think we can give most favourable consideration; there are others which I should like to ponder a little.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend understands that I am not putting them forward as government proposals, but only suggesting the kind of questions a committee might profitably consider.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I know; I am just making some general observations. There are others to which I should be definitely

opposed. There can be I think no objection to the motion in itself. I cannot recall the year, but I remember that under Mr. Speaker Lemieux—

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): The year was 1927.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Thank you. A committee of this kind was set up, and my recollection is that some very good men were on that committee.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Hear, hear. My hon. friend was on it.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I was not thinking of myself, but I was thinking of Sir George Perley, a highly honoured and respected member of this house, who knew a lot about the rules for—shall I say—a layman. I think the gentleman who was subsequently Mr. Speaker Black was on that committee, and your humble servant. We evolved the forty-minute rule, of which we had high hopes. If the Minister of Justice was on that committee—

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): I was.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): —he will probably remember that he thought that by limiting speeches to forty minutes we should curtail the duration of sessions of parliament. I do not want to speak dogmatically, but my impression is that it did not have any such effect; more people spoke, and they spoke oftener. You cannot by any time limitation curtail free speech in a body of men composed of Anglo-Saxons, men who desire freedom of thought, speech and action. However, I would not go back on the forty-minute rule; it has had some salutary effects—we do not have to listen to such long speeches. But I am a bit fearful that some of the suggestions which the right hon. gentleman has made will have the effect of curtailing discussion. Of course the government can put things through if they want to, but if this resolution is adopted it will have the effect of curtailing the rights of private members and of extending the power of the cabinet and the executive. I know that in England they have had to do these things; the pressure of empire business is so much greater than the pressure of business here that perhaps they cannot give effect to all the desires of private members along the lines of certain social legislation which is being promoted from time to time. But I hope the government will pause before taking any step that would curtail the rights of hon. members of this house—I am taking as long