

as is now accomplished by sitting to 11, 12, or 1 o'clock in the morning. However, that seems to be a matter that cannot very well be entertained at present. I trust my hon. friend from Renfrew will not let it drop, but bring it up another session.

Hon. GEO. E. FOSTER (North Toronto). What my right hon. friend has said is very true, that the late Sir John Macdonald was always opposed to any arbitrary limitation of our sittings. For my part I have a confession to make. I was opposed to the rule we adopted last year of the House rising at six o'clock on Wednesdays. I feared it would retard the work of the House and lengthen the session, but I have no hesitation in saying that I have been converted to the new rule. I think it operates excellently well. It is a great relief to get a breathing spell one night out of the week in the very midst of the work, which one may devote to recreation, or, as many of us do, use for the purpose of pulling up back work, which we would have to overtax our energies in doing if it were not for this intermission. Just as I was wrong then, I may be wrong to-day in thinking that if we came to the conclusion to arbitrarily end our sittings at half-past ten, we would not accommodate ourselves ultimately to that restriction and perhaps in the end get through more work and be in better shape physically than we otherwise would. But if our present rule is to be amended, as I think in course of time it will be, I think there is another respect in which a change might be made advantageously. I am perhaps as great a sinner as any man in this House in the matter of making speeches longer than they should be. In the United States, although they do not sit at night, they limit the time of a speaker; and although their 'Hansard' does not show any evidence of it, that is probably due to their elastic method of allowing speeches to be handed in and published as if really spoken. But possibly their system has the effect of making the debates more brisk and perhaps more to the point and certainly prevents long winded speakers like myself from taking up too much of the time of the House. On most of the questions which come before us, a half an hour or three-quarters of an hour should be quite long enough to enable a man to say all he has to say regarding them. Of course there are occasions when it would not be advisable to restrict certain speeches within that limit. For instance when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) has to bring down his budget, it would be rather too much to ask that he should be limited to half an hour or three-quarters of an hour or perhaps within the hour, though if we take the example of the British House of Commons, we find that the budget speeches there, as a rule, are remarkably condensed. In the case, however, of minor debates, such as on the estimates, I think they might well be short-

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

ened, and that the result would be that a better debating power would be developed, we would get more quickly at the kernel or the heart of the subject, and we would not have so many historical disquisitions, especially if we had a government which behaved itself better and did not furnish us so much provocation to go into history with regard to its administration. But seriously speaking, if the rule were adopted of closing earlier in the evening, either by general consent or by rule of the House, and if there was a general disposition to curtail discussions on minor subjects and restrict these within a limited space of time, that I think would be found in the end beneficial. There is a point I wish to emphasize, and I think my right hon. friend will agree with me. Where the strain comes upon a hard working member of the House is in the last three or four weeks of the session. There is then more taken out of him than in all the preceding weeks. That arises from the fact that the great mass of the estimates, which are of great importance, are thrown into the last two or three weeks and sometimes into the last two weeks of the session. While it is the case that the main estimates of late years have been brought down at a fairly early period, other things have intervened, and all estimates, special and supplementary, are thrown on to the last days of the session. That is where the difficulty comes. If the government would be reasonable and bring down its estimates in good time, bring down its important legislation in good time, I am sure the opposition would be fairly reasonable and despatch them promptly and thus save ourselves a good deal. I agree with my hon. friend that the health of the members should be considered in conducting the business of the country, and that public business should be conducted in such a way as not to be too exacting upon our physical powers. Those members who have been in the House a number of years know, and sadly know, the strain and the results of that strain upon their health. It ought to be possible to get through with our daily business by half-past ten every night. At the same time, unless some other changes are made as well, I would rather leave this to the general good sense of the House. But I hope my hon. friend will not lose heart and courage and that, having gained a moral victory this time, he will trudge on until he gets a more substantial measure of success.

Mr. F. D. MONK (Jacques Cartier). I would like to say a word, in accordance with the wish expressed by my right hon. friend the First Minister that we should give our views regarding these proposed changes in the customs of the House. I listened with a great deal of attention to the arguments given by my hon. friend from Renfrew (Mr. Wright). I think he