

where the bulk of members simply did not know how to use procedural possibilities, otherwise the government would have fallen much sooner.

I also find very telling the daily language we unconsciously learn as soon as we enter this worthy precinct and speak among ourselves, when we say for instance we are going to "kill a bill during private members' time", or we have to "sit through the late show". In this vocabulary, one might point to a number of other phrases, all telling of fallacy in the workings of Parliament.

It is clear then I see but one paragraph in the Speech from the Throne, the one about parliamentary reform, and for a very simple reason. If we do not implement rapid reform, we will never find the time to debate and vote the program in the 15 preceding pages, that is 60 or 70 bills, let alone talking budget.

● (2150)

And this program, excuse me if I say so, is far from being innovative. It only continues work undertaken since what I have been able to witness, that is in the preceding 18 months of government.

Certainly many members before me must have been impatient with the archaic parliamentary system, but I believe that surely this is not a reason to accept an unacceptable and unjustifiable situation that must be corrected anyway. In fact, traditions are lost if only because of the changes brought on by the age, occupation and seniority of the members. We might as well develop, with full knowledge of the case, new "rules of the game" adapted to the twenty-first century.

I did not have time to consult the Parliamentary Guide on this, but even if I myself have not reached the age of retirement in the year 2000 I think that there are others also in this House for whom the twenty-first century is not fiction.

My colleagues who have preceded me in this House, not during this session, but during preceding Parliaments, have put forth numerous reform projects especially during the last fifteen years. I have read many of them. One of the most interesting comes from the last session. It seems to be rather meaty even though it is but the beginning of a report which was co-signed by the former member for York Centre (Mr. Walker) and by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert). Just as they are, I am in favour of more respect for democracy, but I am quite incapable of finding where the essence of democracy lies.

For example, if I take the time allocated for speeches in the House, I do not see where 20 or 30 minutes per member, depending on the discussions, has improved the quality of democracy in Canada. It is very rare that a man—and this also means women—has a new idea. When one has one, it can only be brought forth clearly and briefly and, for me, 10 or 15 minutes at the most should be enough. Also, why should we all repeat the same things? Members of a same party can reach prior understanding to allow a smaller number of members to make public the views of the group, divided according to the subjects to be covered. Every speaker in the Parliament of Europe in Strasbourg, for instance, is allowed to speak for seven or nine minutes. I am thinking of the member who spoke

*The Address—Miss Bégin*

before me, whose final words were: "This inflation is just a word". In my opinion, however, this inflation is actually thousands of words. Members of this House are strange beings generally struck on the day of their election with an uncommon illness, namely verbal inflation. I think we could reduce the time allowed for speeches in the House by half and therefore double the amount of time spent on parliamentary duties.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words about the work of committees. I shall do so because working on a committee is almost the very essence of the ordinary member of the House, it is the springboard, the platform, the place, the tool that he can call his own as opposed to other aspects of his parliamentary life such as, for instance, the question period which "is the ministers' property." For instance, I was struck by the fact that the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)—obviously it is his duty and the duty of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) to do so—stressed the matter of the question period. Those are the ministers' problems. As an ordinary member of the House, and no doubt I am expressing a view that we all share, whatever our party, as an ordinary member of this House, I spend hours working with the standing committees of the House.

I think that the remarkable reforms of 1969 intended to change the functions of the committees of the House are far from being implemented. Their spirit has been applied but they have not been implemented. Judging from what I have seen up to now, the 23 committees of the House cannot, at any rate, be considered as working groups. They are not groups, they do a very bad job and they have continuous partisan fights except maybe in two or three committees.

That has struck me because I earnestly admit that one of my main reliefs during my three months as a Canadian delegate to the United Nations last year was to be relieved from committee work. This is absolutely abnormal and I was surprised myself to have such reaction, but it reveals very well the "artificiality" laid upon us. I think that the rigidity we can observe during the committees concerning the time allotted and the order of speakers is against the good functioning of the human spirit. I am not an expert on procedure and organization so I feel free to express what the average citizen would feel in a House committee. A member of Parliament has there a tremendous opportunity to become an expert in some issue that interest him and for which he is prepared.

Mr. Speaker, before you interrupt me I shall say it is ten o'clock and ask you for leave to finish my speech later.

[English]

● (2200)

**PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT  
MOTION**

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.