

deal with purely academic questions and in any case do not involve the enactment of legislation, but a public Bill is usually introduced because there is some evil in the country which it is thought demands a remedy, and it not infrequently happens that although the particular remedy proposed in the public Bill is not adopted, and although the public Bill does not become law during that session, the following session the government, by reason of the discussion on the public Bill, may adopt a remedy similar to the one proposed for the evil which exists. I wish to emphasize particularly the importance of the public Bill as opposed to the notice of motion, and I would suggest that this provision in reference to the four weeks should be made to apply to Monday instead of Thursday so that as a matter of course after four weeks you would make a government day of Monday. Notices of motion, if public Bills ran out, could be reached on Thursday as well as they can on Monday, and the promoter of public Bills would have some chance of having his Bill discussed.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. For the first four weeks the order is not disturbed, public Bills come first.

Mr. LANCASTER. I am saying that the promoter of a public Bill has really only four weeks. On Mondays and Wednesdays public Bills are not reached, as a rule, notices of motion take the time.

On rule 30.

30. All items standing on the orders of the day except government orders shall be taken up according to the precedence assigned to each on the order paper. (Whenever government business has the precedence government orders may be called in such sequence as the government may think fit.)

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I would ask if the committee took into consideration the answering of questions on the orders of the day. I have noticed that in the early part of the session the government take up a great part of the afternoon in answering questions which the opposition are not allowed to comment upon. Could not those questions be printed on the orders of the day as well as be placed in the 'Hansard'? We could greatly expedite matters in that way, and possibly we could save several days time.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. All these questions are answered, and the answers go to the 'Hansard.'

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I mean placing them on the orders of the day previous to coming to the House, not reading them out in the House at all.

Mr. BARKER. I think this rule prevails in England now, where a large portion of the questions are accompanied with the printed answers, and a great deal of the

time now spent by the ministers in reading answers, is saved by that means. I suppose two-thirds of the questions put upon the order paper could be answered on the order paper, and only those questions requiring some explanation might be reserved to be answered under the present system.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. That is the rule in England and the committee discussed the desirability of adopting a similar rule here. I forget at the moment why we did not carry it out, but my recollection is that we found the English rules were so elaborate that to work them out for our use would really take up more time than at the moment we could give to the question. I am inclined to agree that it would be a very desirable amendment. There has been a change made in number 30, and it is designed I think to follow the present practice. The present practice permits the government to call their own orders in such sequence as they see fit. The only words added are 'except government orders.' It is to carry out what is already the practice recognized by the House, and what has always been the case I think. Rule 31, regarding dropped orders, is also designed to carry out what is supposed to be the present practice, that is, that questions and notices of motion drop unless they are allowed to stand at the request of the government, that is to say, they will otherwise disappear from the order paper when once called. I was inclined to think that should be done only with the consent of the House; but I was reminded of the practice as laid down by Sir John A. Macdonald and other eminent men many years ago, and the report of their remarks as contained in the 'Hansard' showed that this was always done by the request of the government. Therefore, I assented to the rule being passed in that way.

Mr. SPROULE. Rule 30 says:

All items standing on the orders of the day (except government orders) shall be taken up according to the precedence assigned to each on the order paper.

Is it not possible that a good result could be accomplished by having some elasticity in that rule? Where there are several orders on the paper it would be an advantage, if a certain order, whether with the consent of the House, or by some other means could be taken up instead of the orders of the day. A member may have a motion standing in his name and he may purposely keep it on the paper with the object of delaying the House in reaching other orders on the paper. Under such circumstances another hon. member has no opportunity of taking up any other order while that order remains on the paper. I have known of an order being kept upon the paper for a length of time to the detriment of the work of the House. Is it the under-