

en the session. A readiness on the part of the government with their Bills and an equally honest readiness to answer questions and give information when asked for, would put a stop to ninety-nine per cent of the discussions and time wasted in the other House in the consideration of measures which come before them.

Hon. Mr. ROSS (Middlesex)—I am somewhat impressed with the view presented by the hon. senator from Halifax, although I feel that we should thank the hon. senator from Wellington for bringing up the subject. I feel as if the regulation of the discussion of the other House lengthened debates and matters germane to the prolongation of the session, are matters with which we have really nothing to do unless it is made quite clear that the conduct of the other House interferes with the operation of parliamentary institutions or brings discredit upon the government of the country. Of course, as a branch of parliament, we are interested in maintaining the dignity of parliament whether represented by the House of Commons or by this Chamber. Beyond that, I would feel, if I were a member of the House of Commons, like resenting any interference with the House either as to the length of the session or the length of the discussions, or the mode in which the House of Commons conducts its business. Of course it goes without saying that this session is a long session; it goes without saying that there have been many long sessions and after an experience of eleven years in the House of Commons, I know that speeches are sometimes unnecessarily long, and perhaps like other hon. members of that House who have seats here, I should plead guilty to having offended in that particular myself. Upon my observations of the British House of Commons—and I think other hon. senators will corroborate that view—the practice there is to curtail speeches to very narrow limit. In discussing the great South African war it was said that Chamberlain in twenty-five minutes presented the views of the government and made a defence of the government so far as the war was concerned. Should such a defence be made in our House of Commons, I fear very much that no member of

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that House would make a defence which he would consider adequate in that time. There is no doubt party government is open to that abuse, if abuse you can call it. There is no doubt that, under our party system, government is apt to be obstructed by a resolute, determined and resourceful opposition. A cynic has said that party government consists in this, that half the cleverest men of the country are occupying their time in preventing the other half carrying on the government of the country. There may be some force in that, but that is one of the incidents in parliamentary government, and we must leave it largely to the judgment of members of the House of Commons themselves and let public opinion, which, after all, regulates parliament as well as individuals, determine what course it should pursue, at the same time expressing as we do in dignified and proper language our opinion that there is a tendency to prolong the session. I admit with the hon. senator from Wellington that the prolongation of the session may produce the evils to which he refers. It is a very serious thing for business men to be absent from their business, to be prevented from the management of their private affairs as long as it is necessary in this country to attend a session of parliament. That is a serious thing, and the end of it may be, as my hon. friend has suggested, that some men who are admirably fitted for representatives in either House, will be deterred by these circumstances from giving the public the benefit of their services.

This, too, is a matter which will probably cure itself to a certain extent in the course of time. As the Minister of Trade and Commerce has said, in our early days a session of one hundred days was considered a long session. When the sessions extended to four months, we considered we were imposed upon. Matters have changed since then, and what the remedy is, it that the closure which has been adopted myself, speaking after some experience, that the closure which has been adopted in England is not, after all, a good thing. There ought to be some limit of discussion. As the Duke of Wellington said, 'The King's government must go on,' and if the