

Procedure and Organization

because the Canadian people did not want them there. They wanted the Prime Minister and his government to lead them and carry out their business.

I believe the thinking behind the government's attempt to bring this rule change into force was that they appreciated the fact they must allow the opposition to debate all bills, regardless of the subject matter, long enough to become acquainted with all the details so that the news media, newspapers, television and radio, would have the opportunity to put these before the people of Canada.

If it is a poor bill, the government may withdraw it. If on the other hand they feel it is acceptable to the nation and themselves, they can pass the bill.

I agree with the last speaker when he says that it is a necessity that the public media must have an opportunity to debate a bill. The question is, Mr. Speaker, how long is long enough? How long should a bill be debated? I know my hon. friend is not thinking in these terms, but obviously we cannot debate one bill in the House of Commons for a year. That would be ridiculous. Obviously it cannot even be debated for three or four months. How long should we have to debate a bill? The hon. member suggested four days.

The hon. member suggested that before a speech is given it should be researched, notes condensed, and the person giving the speech should know what he is talking about. I suggest to the hon. member he should look back over his own notes and do a little research. He says the government can put a bill through in four days. He is absolutely wrong, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hees: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the proposed rule change only one day is allotted for each stage of a bill. At the most four days debate could be spread over ten days. Four days debate spread over ten days!

● (3:50 p.m.)

Mr. Whicher: That is absolutely right, but the hon. member also spoke about the newspapers, television and radio. Surely if this is a matter which arouses public opinion it could be discussed during the week and throughout the country. My hon. friend, perhaps unintentionally, left an impression that the news media and the Canadian public would have an opportunity to discuss a proposed bill for only four days. This is not correct. I should like to point out, Mr. Speak-

er, that the allocation allows for at least three days at each stage of a bill.

Mr. Hees: No. One day.

Mr. Whicher: On top of that there are the week ends. In some instances there would be two week ends. Therefore it would be quite possible that from the first reading stage until the final stage of a bill two weeks could elapse. In addition there are the committees of the house. Bills would go into the committees. On the committees my hon. friends in the opposition have a larger percentage of the membership than they have in the House of Commons. They have the right at that time to bring any matter which is before a committee to the attention of the press, radio and television.

I suggest there will be plenty of time for the people of Canada to be informed about whatever bill may be under consideration. The various arguments will be recorded in the press and public opinion will be fed back into the House of Commons where government members and members of the opposition will have the opportunity to use their consciences and vote as they see fit.

I do not wish to take too much time on this. I say that this government was put in office on June 25, over a year ago now, to do a job. It is all very well for my hon. friend to ask what they are holding up, or what they have held up in the past. I think this is a fair enough question. He also went on to say, and I agree with him, that there are many serious problems in Canada. He mentioned inflation. Of course it is a serious problem which must be tackled. There are many other problems. Canada must be developed. We need more people here. There are a great many other problems which could be mentioned.

I might mention the omnibus Criminal Code bill in respect of which there were many, many amendments. When the government sees that it is involved in a very lengthy debate obviously there is no useful purpose in placing a good deal of legislation on the order paper because there would be no opportunity to present it. The government must know where it stands. It must know that within a reasonable period of time a bill will be passed or tossed out.

My hon. friends, particularly those of the Official Opposition, on numerous occasions have mentioned the Mother of Parliaments in England. I think every member of this house will bow to that great parliament which over the last few hundred years has done so much