

question these solutions and attempt to improve them or propose alternatives. Neither role can be subordinate to the other.

It goes without saying that any proposal for procedural reform must assist both sides of this house to function more efficiently. Anything less would be self-defeating. Anything less would diminish the very institution which we seek to assist. The discussions which have been proceeding on and off for the past fortnight, or even longer, among the representatives of the several parties in the house must not be permitted to continue indefinitely.

• (5:40 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Trudeau: Nor should they be permitted to lead, either by agreement or in the absence of it, to procedural changes which will upset the delicate and essential balance between government and opposition so necessary to the proper functioning of parliament. Members on this side of the house should not forget the investment of time and energy—the opposition may even think, perhaps too much time and energy—which has been necessarily devoted to the preparation and presentation of legislative proposals. They should not forget this lest they assume that hon. members opposite are somehow able to study and consider those same proposals in a fraction of that time. Good legislation, effective legislation, requires the expenditure of extensive effort on both sides of this house.

It is our responsibility as members to engage here in discussions which are as knowledgeable as possible. Every opportunity to learn more about proposed legislation, and more about the social or economic or other situations which have given rise to that proposed legislation, must be followed by all of us. It is my feeling that the advantage in this respect has too long rested with the government. For that reason a most important concept which has been proposed to members, along with other procedural reforms, is the provision of public funds to permit opposition parties to obtain the services of researchers, advisers and experts to assist them. The government cannot function without expert assistance. For the same reason, neither should the opposition be expected to do so.

Withal, however, we must keep constantly in mind the temper of the people of this country. The public expects this house to be productive, to be efficient, to be wise in its

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deliberations. We must not contribute to any belief that we here are more involved with the sound of our voices than with the good of Canada. I am sure this sense of urgency is fully shared by members of this house.

This concern about the substance of our deliberations, however, may prove of little value should we be unable to break out of the procedural strait-jacket which now embraces us. Conducting business on the basis of the old rules to which we have reverted is not entirely without a certain degree of charm, I must admit. There is, for example, a touch of history revealed in the names of the committees of the house. My favourite is unquestionably the agriculture and colonization committee. But all the colour of its title will not equip that committee to do the work required of it. For one thing, it has 60 members, almost one quarter of the total membership of this house.

Under this system we cannot accomplish a fraction of what this house agrees must be done. The whole structure of committees simply must be reviewed and overhauled as the first step in the process of procedural reform.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Trudeau: There are other contemplated changes that may require intensive study. A possible change, for example, but one which must be examined carefully, is the practice of delegating legislative authority, in terms of ministerial orders and orders made in council, and in the sense of decisions of quasi-judicial bodies. Whatever we decide, it should be based on a full knowledge of both the strengths and the weaknesses of our present practices. Accordingly, I have asked the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) to give attention to these particular practices.

We have all had occasion to observe recently the heartening phenomenon in Canada of widespread involvement in political activities by many segments of the community which until now were detached. We have all had the opportunity to note the frightening consequences in other countries, and it is noted in some places of our own, of the alienation of large numbers of people from the mainstream of a country's political life. Like it or not, we in this house bear a heavy responsibility for promoting healthy involvement and for discouraging unhealthy alienation. We discharge that responsibility through our activities here, by projecting throughout this land an image of a parliament aware of its responsibilities,