

*The Address—Mr. Graydon*

of us is wholly blameless for this state of affairs, but surely that is an additional reason why we should seek to reform both parliament and ourselves. We may as well be frank. My remarks last year on the debate on the address were perhaps too long. The Prime Minister himself, I recall, rebuked me at that time for the length of my speech, and then, proceeding to ignore his own advice, he spoke for an hour and a quarter longer than I did. I hope that on this occasion he will follow the advice he gave me at that time and that we shall both show parliament and the country that we are capable of condensing our remarks.

Our system of setting up committees is outmoded and outdated, and we do not operate very well the system we have, either. For proof of this, let us look at our session which has just ended and which covered the major part of 1943. The standing committee on agriculture and colonization did not sit until 115 days had elapsed from the opening of the session. The radio broadcasting committee did not commence its business until 123 days had elapsed from the opening of parliament, while the war expenditures committee began its closed door sessions 171 days after parliament had convened. One of the last things parliament did last session before its adjournment was to set up this war expenditures committee, which should have been convened many months before.

I should observe, I think, at this point that this committee's usefulness was gravely impaired by the fact that the government majority in the committee insisted upon its subcommittee deliberations being in camera. It is about time that the lid was blown off these in-camera sessions of the war expenditures committee. It is little short of a national disgrace that the people of Canada should not know something about the investigations of these contracts. I am opposed to the whole system of pulling down the blinds, closing the shutters and locking the doors when public contracts are being investigated.

As a matter of curiosity and concern I checked up the details in relation to the meetings held by standing committees from 1936 to 1943 inclusive. In those eight years the committee on agriculture and colonization sat in only six of the eight years—that is, it sat only for short times in six out of the eight years—for a total of seventy-one days in the eight years. Yet during that period agriculture passed through one of the most critical and trying stages in its history.

To give some idea as to the outmoded system exemplified by standing committees, I draw the attention of this house to the industrial and international relations committee. It has not sat since 1936, although labour

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and foreign affairs have constituted, in the meantime, two of the most important matters of national concern. It is hard to imagine that work could not be found for this very important committee during that whole period of time.

Then, again, why should two major matters be lumped together under the umbrella of one committee, while a separate committee sits for such subjects as debates, printing, standing orders and privileges and elections? Four separate committees for these subjects and only one committee to cover the whole area of labour and international relations. The whole thing does not add up. The whole thing does not make sense.

I hope that the new committee will commence its work with courage and determination to see that parliament, its methods, its rules and its procedure are taken out of the mothballs, dusted off, and made to work efficiently for the people of Canada.

To our left and much too far to the left for most people in Canada sits a group in the house to which I desire to direct a few remarks this afternoon. They will not be abusive remarks, because we have to learn in this country that our enemies at the moment do not happen to be Canadian, and, furthermore, that only by calm analysis and the utilization of light rather than heat in dealing with party programmes and policies will this nation get anywhere in the end. I have never cared for violent public denunciations of political parties or their supporters, but I take this opportunity of denying what seems to be an implied claim by the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation party that they have some monopoly on the will and desire of citizens generally in Canada to see this nation reaching her maximum national stature. No group or no party has a right to make such an implied claim. The Progressive Conservative party yields to none in its desire and, if I may say so, in its capacity, to achieve that objective.

Our party stands for a programme of rational reform, as opposed to a policy, on the one hand, of rigid reaction, and a policy, on the other hand, of reckless revolution. Our party stands pledged to remove the abuses and reform the present system. We will go right up to the precipice on the pathway of rational reform with the C.C.F. or any other party, but at the edge of the precipice we must part company with those who would lose their balance and plunge headlong over the cliff into the unfathomable depths of chaos and revolution below.

Our party stands for a policy of expanding production as the basis of prosperity. Our