

*Procedure and Organization*

Hammond regarding the conditions prevailing at the time Athens was threatened. Here it is:

Alcibiade's contribution to that revolution was only to get it under way by raising the false hope of a Persian alliance. His agents went to Athens, and Pisandre, their leader, said to the citizen's assembly that their only hope of survival was an alliance with the Persians. He declared it possible if Alcibiade were asked to come back, if the democracy which the Persian king did not like were abolished and if in its place an oligarchy on which the king could rely were established. The assembly did not like the idea of losing its democratic constitution but, yielding to the circumstances, it nevertheless approved the suggested change.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, in view of the quick changes the government wants to make on the eve of the adjournment of the 1st Session of the 28th Parliament, we cannot accept the closure rule which it wants to impose upon us and we will fight for the survival of this democracy.

This, Mr. Speaker, was happening in ancient Athens. It was the first step towards the fall of democracy. They received a proposal which it was impossible for them to look into. Its approval had to be hastened so as to conclude the alliance. It was passed in haste without the required consideration and that was the end of the democratic government.

A little later, the same thing happened with the Romans. They were compelled on many occasions to resort to dictatorial powers in order to dispose of certain matters. That was more efficient, as the government seems to tell us in the house. What happened then? The house knows it. The Senate of Rome was so well used to totalitarian methods that it was easy for dictator Julius Caesar to eventually assume full powers.

Well, I can say that today there are Julius Caesars who introduce amendments under another form, such as standing order 75c and who wish to set up in parliament an unacceptable dictatorship. The hon. members might think that could not happen.

● (3:40 p.m.)

Clothes, cars, TV sets, material things can change, but human nature is unalterable from one generation to another. Once the thin edge of the wedge—in the present case it is rather blunt—has penetrated, the destruction of democratic machinery has begun. When opportunism and efficiency are the arguments used to destroy parliamentary rules, a long step forward has been taken towards the destruction of democracy itself.

We are here, we should not forget it, not for ourselves, but to form a Parliament for the Canadian people. Among our duties, we have to facilitate relations between both sides of the house, in order to enable us to contribute, as is suitable, to the affairs of the state.

Without wishing at all to blame someone or express recriminations, I can say that whoever objectively studies the atmosphere in the House of Commons at the present time will admit that we do not have the kind of institution to which the Canadian people are entitled. I ask the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacDonald) and the whole government to consider the situation from that angle.

I do not want to quote authorities, citations, or the Standing Orders; in a frank and straightforward manner, I tell the government what I think. It is obvious that the present atmosphere in the House of Commons does not allow us to deal with the affairs of the country, because of Rule 75c which, in my opinion, should be removed without more ado.

At the beginning of the debate on the omnibus bill, we said: Remove from the bill the provisions on abortion and homosexuality, and we shall immediately vote for this legislation which, without being perfect, is nonetheless acceptable.

Today, we say: Remove Rule 75c and we shall agree to expedite the business of the house and get on with our jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I read complete official report of the 1913 debate, when they inserted in the Standing Orders, the provision which was merely a rule of closure of which Rule 75c is a replica. I read the report of debates when the closure was applied in 1913, 1917, 1921, 1926 and 1932.

Mr. Speaker, in that vast documentation on the rule of closure, nowhere can we find a definition which would allow the government to impose a limit of time. Rule 75c is precisely a permanent and automatic rule of closure which is unacceptable to us.

Mr. Speaker, how long will justice prevail in our country under such a system? What will happen to order and honesty? That is precisely what happened in the House of Commons.

Those who lived through the events of the last two or three weeks will no longer have for parliament the feeling and the respect they had for that institution. No unbiased