

*Procedure and Organization*

amendment proposed by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), the house leader of the Official Opposition. But before doing so I wish to speak of how essential it is, with our growing responsibilities, that each member of the house should be aware of the necessity to program the work of the house in such a way as to afford members time to get back to their constituencies and to go into other matters than those which are debated here on Parliament Hill week after week and month after month throughout the year. I think we all feel that we spend too much time here, that we spend so much time here that our life in the House of Commons becomes unrealistic and, like people living in a monastery or a boy's boarding school, we begin to look upon it as the centre of the world or the centre of the nation when in fact the centres of the nation may be in many other places.

I believe all of us would welcome the opportunity to know the sort of schedule we were going to operate on throughout the year, to know when we could expect with certainty to visit our constituencies to reacquaint ourselves with our electors, refresh our memories about our own regions, their economic and social problems, and thus become better members of the house. With the evolution of the committee system which has blossomed within a year or two into a very formidable structure, absorbing an enormous amount of the time of members, I think we all realize that unless we can bring about a proper allocation of our time between the work of the committees and the work of this chamber, we cannot possibly discharge our duties as honest, elected members of this house.

All of us, whether we are in the opposition or on this side of the house, know we have a duty to the nation in respect of legislation, a duty that involves more than the obstruction of legislation which we may oppose. We have a duty to understand legislation, to understand it by contact with our constituents outside the house, to understand it through time for reflection, to understand it by contact with experts through the committee system, and then to apply our minds to expressing our ideas in the house, voting on the issues, and moving on to the next subject. If we cannot find a way of almost totally programming our work, then as our duties become heavier and heavier our efficiency and capability to deal with legislation will suffer and the people of the nation will suffer because of our inability to cope with our own problems and our own programming.

[Mr. Deachman.]

In the situation in which we find ourselves now, as the summer disappears and as we struggle with the job of programming our work, the first proposition to be made must concern good will. Most of the things that we do in this house are done on a basis of good will. For the greater part of the year we find we do not need to avail ourselves of the rules, to come to grips with one rule in particular to bring a procedure or process to an end. Even though as members of parliament we may be dogmatically opposed on matters of policy we find we must act here in the interests of the nation, and that we must come to a settlement among ourselves as to how a matter is to be disposed of. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, may I say we also know there are instances throughout the year when negotiation breaks down, when lines become hardened, when members spend more time in cat-calling and banter. In fact on occasion I find myself—and I regret it—indulging in such things under tense circumstances, as do other hon. members. But I do not think we leave the chamber feeling any great pride after doing so.

To revert to my theme, we do get into situations where negotiation will not solve the impasse. Therefore we have to move one step beyond that to a rule that will break the jam, not because we want to throttle parliament, not because we want to put a bridle on the opposition, not because we want to bull or ram something through parliament, as suggested yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), but because we are compelled to act by the fact that we are elected representatives, by the fact that we come here to serve our constituencies and the nation. And the way we can act is to program a legislative timetable, irrespective of whether this party sits on this side of the house or whether some other party sits on this side of the house. We must not continue unprogrammed, heading into the year without knowing how we are going to bring it to an end. We must find ways of breaking the deadlocks that sometimes occur.

So, Mr. Speaker, this morning I wish to make a suggestion, stemming from the suggestion of the hon. member for Peel South as expressed yesterday by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River, in the form of an amendment to the amendment of the hon. member for Peace River, which would add at the end thereof the following words:

—and in substitution therefor to recommend to the house a proposed standing order by which an allocation of time motion may be proposed to the