

*The Address—Mr. Allmand*

we are going that the purposes, goals and ends of parliament can be determined. Once we have decided this we can determine how effective are our rules.

Let me refer briefly to the functions and purposes of parliament. Among other things parliament is a legislature in which we enact legislation. It is a forum in which we discuss the policies of government; a body to keep a check on the administration and to examine their spending estimates. It is a body to vote funds necessary to support government programs. These are the purposes of parliament and our rules must serve them effectively.

At this point I should like to make some recommendations in respect of our procedures. I realize I am a relatively new member and that many of these recommendations may have been made before, but I should like to put them on record. Perhaps they will be of some help to the parliamentary committee on procedure. It was the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) who said this afternoon that he was a member of that committee and would welcome recommendations.

First, with respect to irrelevancy and repetition, standing order 34 (2) reads as follows:

Mr. Speaker or the Chairman, after having called the attention of the house or of the committee, to the conduct of a member who persists in irrelevancy, or repetition may direct him to discontinue his speech, and if then the member still continues to speak, Mr. Speaker shall name him or, if in committee, the chairman shall report him to the house.

It would seem to me that one of the rules which is violated more often than others in this house is that rule in relation to irrelevancy and repetition. I have often wondered why that rule has not been enforced more strictly. I think if it were we would have a much more efficient and interesting parliament.

Second, I should like to propose that the debate on the speech from the throne be limited to three days. The eight day period may have been acceptable 20 or even 10 years ago, but today we no longer have time for such indulgences. In the United Kingdom the debate on the speech from the throne is limited to five days, and I believe they have more than twice the number of members we have in Canada.

Third, I should like to recommend that the debate on the budget speech be limited to three days, and that members be restricted in their speeches to matters referred to in the budget or to matters of national economic importance omitted. Again in the United

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Next, and fourth, I should like to recommend that speeches in the house be limited to thirty minutes, and in the committee of the whole to twenty minutes. It is my belief that anything one might want to say can and should be said in that time, and that such a rule would provide for a greater number of speakers and greater interest in the house. It becomes very boring when one sits here for 40 minutes or an hour listening to a speech. If we had shorter speeches we would have a greater variety. They would then be of greater interest and more members would be able to participate.

My fifth recommendation is that the business committee be used throughout the session of parliament and that an allocation of time be given to all items. When a session opens, the government should immediately place a great portion of its business on the order paper to be referred to the business committee where it would be given a priority and allocation of time.

Sixth, I would recommend that parliament itself should be given a fixed timetable for its sessions, adjournments and recesses. In this way the government, opposition and all members of parliament would be better able to plan their programs.

As my seventh recommendation I would suggest that when divisions are called in the house the ringing of the division bells be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes. I cannot remember the number of times I have sat in my seat for 30 minutes or more while the bells rang, waiting for members to come in to vote. Again to refer to the United Kingdom, there the division bells are limited to six minutes; yet the city of London is much larger than Ottawa and it is more difficult to get to parliament to vote. I do not think we can afford the luxury of an unlimited time in this regard. It only encourages absence and inefficiency.

As my eighth recommendation I suggest that votes in the committee of the whole be organized so that they may be allowed to stand at the request of a certain number of members. When we are dealing with a long bill with hundreds of clauses, such as the transport bill which was dealt with last session, there may be as many as 20 votes in an afternoon without any bell or notice. In such a situation it is necessary for all members of the house, including members of the cabinet to be on hand at all times. I might note that on one