

half an hour's dissertation setting out your impression of the debate, having been obliged to listen to a great deal of it. It has no continuity; it is not relevant to anything, even to the Speech from the Throne. It covers a multitude of subjects; it is sometimes amusing, sometimes heavy and sometimes really dull; and from your point of view, Mr. Speaker, it must seem very long indeed. As I say, I believe we should take another look at this whole procedure.

Originally it had a purpose in allowing new members to make their maiden speeches. I should like to comment on the last speech we heard. I presume it was a maiden speech and I should like to commend the hon. member who made it. It was probably not the best speech ever made in parliament but it certainly evidenced a great deal of sincerity. The hon. member knew what he was talking about, and his speech was his own. Earlier this afternoon we listened to the speech of another Liberal, the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Murphy) who gave an address which I am sure was written by the Algoma Steel Corporation board of directors. He could not possibly believe all the tripe he read in that speech. It was like a breath of fresh air to hear the hon. member to whom I referred a few moments ago talk about things with which he was familiar and which he understood.

A few years ago, whenever an hon. member read his speech to the House I made a practice of rising—except, of course, in the case of a maiden speech—to draw the attention of Mr. Speaker to what was happening. I intend to begin doing so again, and Mr. Speaker will have to reach a decision whether to object to the practice of reading speeches or whether to object to my drawing his attention repeatedly to an infringement of our rules, as I intend to do at half-minute intervals if necessary.

It seems to me that in days when speeches are being written by the library staff, by executive secretaries and by outside writers, members of parliament are listening less and less to hon. members to whom they appear to be listening; they are, in fact, listening to the reading of speeches which may have been written by God knows whom. As Your Honour knows, we have a rule which says that members must disclose the authorship of speeches which are read. If they are asked, they must disclose the name of whoever wrote them.

We also have a rule, a very loose rule and one which is not applied strictly in practice, that Mr. Speaker must insist that an hon.

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member should not read a speech—he may refer to very extensive notes but he should not read the speech in its entirety. I have no objection to an hon. member providing himself with assistance in the development of a speech upon a specific subject. In many cases it makes for a better and more informative speech. But I do object to his reading a speech which someone else has written. If this is to be allowed, why do we not simply make arrangements for such speeches to be tabled, as they are in the United States? A member of one of the legislative chambers there will get up and say: I made a speech in Oregon yesterday and I should like it included in the record. Another member might say: I attended a meeting of a Board of Trade two weeks ago and I should like the speech I made at that time to be included in the record. Indeed, a congressman or a senator might even say: I have a friend who made a pretty good speech in Timbuktu, and I should like it to be included in the record of our proceedings. If this is what we want to do, if we wish merely to compile a record rather than a report of the opinions of members of parliament duly elected, we should establish some system different from the one we are now using.

Despite the opinion I have of certain individual members of this House, I believe that most of those elected to parliament are qualified to represent their constituents and that in most cases they are capable of making a contribution to our work. There are no tombstone candidates here. In fact, I have been very impressed by the calibre of the members who have taken part off-the-cuff in our committee proceedings. To make no bones about it, I have been impressed particularly by some of the backbench Liberals. I have not been so impressed by the way in which they vote, but I have been impressed by their ability while serving on committees. Anything less in the House is detrimental to the conception of democracy.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It is the front bench Liberals who bother us.

Mr. Peters: They certainly bother us more than do some of the others. The other day the Prime Minister made a speech in this debate and he read every word of it. It was a lousy speech but it will look very well in print. In my opinion he could have crucified the Leader of the Opposition had he wished to do so, but he did not choose to because he was so impressed by the way the written word was