

large number of Bills brought in would render any fair open discussion impossible.

Yet the system of working through committees has many disadvantages. It narrows the legislative horizon of all the members of the House, and leaves them practically ignorant of the issues involved in many Bills. Without having heard a Bill discussed, they are asked to vote on it. Obviously intelligent voting is often impossible. The system gives rise, also, to more or less conflicting legislation. The range of each committee cannot always be sharply defined; and, on the other hand, Bills are not always framed so as to fall definitely within the sphere of any one committee. Thus two Bills may become law and each contain clauses inconsistent with clauses in the other. The committee system, in short, tends to rob legislation of organic quality. Another disadvantage is the lack of publicity with regard to the proceedings of the house. The conferences of committees are secret, and no reports of discussions on Bills ever appear in print, except brief *resumes* of the wholly inadequate debates of the House.

A peculiar feature of the House of Representatives is, that there are practically no leaders of parties. It is true that men whose experience and natural talents render them influential with their party, but no member of the House enjoys the pre-eminence of recognized leadership. This unique feature owes its existence largely to the omission from the American system of a body corresponding to the British Cabinet;—there is no Prime Minister and hence no leader of the popular House. The leaderless condition of the House makes it difficult to fix responsibility for legislation upon any particular person or persons. Responsibility is so divided among the House as a body and the committees who consider the Bills that the result is either no responsibility at all or responsibility so placed as to be almost valueless as a check upon legislation.

The Speaker of the House is unique as a Speaker. So far from laying aside his political predilections on taking the Chair, he takes advantage of his position, and is expected to take advantage of it, to further the interests of the party to which he belongs. Thus he will appoint members of his own party as chairmen of committees, he will rule in favor of his political friends when