

*Standing Orders*

should be put by Mr. Speaker, including all underlying amendments, after sixty minutes of debate have elapsed.

Hon. members who would like to read up on this subject will find it fully dealt with in the fifteenth edition of May at page 461 and following. As I mentioned a few moments ago, I have not been able to find any recent record to give the house in regard to time allocation orders.

My next suggested amendment is:

(b) For the fixation in standing orders of a time limit on debates on the address in reply to the speech from the throne and the debate on the budget, after the expiration of which periods of time, the motion and all underlying amendments would be put by Mr. Speaker.

I have turned up British *Hansards* in regard to debates on the address. Hon. members will recall that the last session at Westminster was perhaps one of the longest and most hectic in many years. The government had a slim majority, and there was the threat of a general election hanging over the house for practically the entire period. On looking up the record I find that six days were devoted to the debate on the address. The mover of the address took thirteen minutes; the seconder took ten minutes. On the first day, October 31, 1950, seven and one-half hours were devoted to the debate. There were eighteen speakers, including the leader of the opposition and the Prime Minister. The average length of the speeches was twenty-five minutes. To summarize the debate on the address that session, it took forty-five and one-half hours; there were one hundred speakers, and the over-all average was twenty-six minutes per speaker. I ran across one thing that rather interested me, which I would like to mention now. On the fifth of the six allotted days Mr. Speaker made this statement, which will be found at page 606 of British *Hansard*, fifth series, volume 480. The house was then considering the housing amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the amendment, I am afraid I must inform the house that there are about fifty members who would like to speak today.

That was a short day. Twelve members spoke. When the time arrived for the vote on the amendment, it was taken; the other thirty-eight speakers simply did not have a chance to speak.

With respect to the debate on the address during the present session, it started on November 6 and concluded on November 13, lasting only six days or thirty-eight and one-half hours. There were 107 speakers and the average time per speaker was twenty-one minutes. The mover took thirteen minutes; the seconder took eleven minutes. Many speakers took less than fifteen minutes. It

was a brisk and sparkling debate. It was quite obvious that no member was reading his speech. Every member who took part in that debate had something on his mind he wanted to get over to the house. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we would have a much better attendance in this house if our procedure were similar to that at Westminster.

Now I come to the next suggested amendment:

(c) For the limiting to one half hour of the debate on all procedural motions and underlying amendments.

In view of what I have already said in reference to what happened the Thursday before Christmas I need make no further comment on this proposed amendment:

The next proposed amendment is:

(d) For provision that at the expiration of the seventh allotted day the chairman of the committee of supply and ways and means shall forthwith and without further debate put every question necessary to dispose of all of the votes of the departmental estimates under consideration.

Under standing order 16 the British House of Commons provides that twenty-six days, being days before August 5, shall be allotted to the business of supply in each session. Hon. members will have noted that during the week I quoted the house was told what allotted day that day was. A very careful record is kept, and on the twenty-fourth day all outstanding votes are put without further debate. In framing my recommendation as I did I felt that it might be considered too drastic to accept in toto the British practice in regard to estimates, though as far as I am concerned I am all for the practice at Westminster. My suggestion was simply that we incorporate in our rules a provision whereby a serious filibuster on the estimates could not develop.

Now I come to the last suggested amendment:

(e) For the requirement that at least four members should rise in their seats to express opposition for a request for unanimous consent to a suspension of the rules, otherwise unanimous consent of the house to be presumed when requested.

I bring this up because of the fact that from time to time in connection with the work of the house, particularly in connection with committee work, often for good reasons bills will come quite late before the banking and commerce and other committees, and suspension of the rules is necessary unless the applicants are to be put to the trouble and expense and delay of coming back to parliament at another session. Usually consent is obtained without any difficulty. But on one occasion during the last session it did not look as if unanimous consent was going to be granted. I do believe that the