

Hon. A. C. HARDY: Honourable senators, it is not my intention to attempt to controvert anything which has been said by my friend to my left (Hon. Mr. Murdock). We all know how to take him.

I want first to convey, in a very few words, my personal congratulations to the honourable senator who has just been promoted to the important post of leader on the other side of the House (Hon. Mr. Ballantyne).

Hon. Mr. DUFF: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. HARDY: He has taken this important position at great personal sacrifice, and I know that his action is appreciated on this side of the House just as much as it is on the other side.

In referring to what the leader on this side (Hon. Mr. King) has said, I do not intend to go into detail or to take up much time. One thought has occurred to me, not only because of the lack of work before us this session, but also by reason of our procedure in various debates over a number of years. When I first entered this House, twenty years ago, we used to deal fully with many bills, especially public bills, in Committee of the Whole; but for probably the last ten years—I do not want to set any limit one way or the other—the one object of this House has seemed to be to finish its work as quickly as possible, and I do not think it can be controverted that on giving bills the first and second readings we have immediately referred them to a standing committee. Some bills must go to standing committees, of course, but many bills that have gone to standing committees should have been dealt with in Committee of the Whole.

If I have the permission of the House I would refer, though it may be contrary to the rules to do so, to one instance that occurred this session. I have in mind the way in which we dealt with the treaties with the South American republics. You will remember that the bills concerning them were referred to the Committee on Banking and Commerce. They were Government bills of outstanding interest to anyone having the welfare of the country at heart and desiring to know something of what was going on. I was not present at the hearing before the Banking and Commerce Committee, but I understand a great deal of enlightening information was brought out there. None of that, however, was reported to this House; there was merely a report from the committee approving of the treaties. The matter was dealt with in a summary way, and probably from a business the public know anything about what these treaties mean? They came to us after a brief

debate in the other House. We had an opportunity, had we wished to take advantage of it, to discuss them in detail in Committee of the Whole, and thereby make a great deal of valuable information available to the country. But we did not take advantage of that opportunity. I refer to this instance only because it is a recent one. The same kind of thing has been going on for a good many years.

I should like to suggest to honourable senators that every public bill coming before us should, unless there is a very strong reason for referring it to a standing committee, be considered by the Senate in Committee of the Whole. That procedure would not only give us work to do—which perhaps is not of transcendent importance, for the chief consideration is to see that measures are properly handled—but it would also be a means of keeping the public better informed on the character of the legislation passing through this House, and the care with which it is attended to. We do know that throughout the country there is a strong and growing feeling that the Senate does very little, that our members, especially those who live at Ottawa or not very far away, are mainly interested in getting through with their work as quickly as possible and then going home. Consideration of public bills in Committee of the Whole would result in our work being given more publicity in the Press, particularly in the local press, which now pays no attention at all to us. I make these remarks by way of suggestion only.

From time to time we hear suggestions as to means of increasing our work and at the same time relieving the House of Commons of some of its work, especially with regard to bills that need to be considered in committee. I fully agree with the purpose behind these suggestions, as I am sure every honourable senator does. But of course there is involved the question of what measures may be properly initiated in the Senate, and what ones the elected representatives, who have certain responsibilities to their constituents, may find it convenient to have initiated here. These are matters that may be brought up and discussed at any time in due course.

I want to corroborate what the honourable leader of the House (Hon. Mr. King) has said about meetings of senators who sit on this side. In the twenty years during which I have been a senator I have attended only one caucus, which was the only one held in all that time. If we continue along this line we ought to be able to keep free of political bias. We are now making a fresh start, as it were, with two new leaders, though I do not think that anyone could accuse the late Right Hon-