

*The Address—Mr. Churchill*

I do not think we have to follow the British system entirely. I believe we can work out our own methods. There is a unitary system of government. We operate under a federal system, and we have problems ranging from coast to coast which have to be disclosed and discussed in this chamber. That makes this chamber somewhat different in its methods from the chamber in the United Kingdom.

It is important to look at the rules and procedures of this chamber but I think that should be done as it used to be done, under the direction of the Speaker with agreement among the parties, rather than by the acceptance of government proposals which can be forced through the house by the majority which the government can obtain through the support of various smaller parties in the house. That is the weakness of what has happened during the last two or three years. It is a compulsory alteration of the rules of this chamber, and the more the restrictions are applied the more is freedom of speech denied.

Mismanagement of government business has been the cause of a great deal of this. We have just had the longest session in Canada's history, and that was unnecessary. The session should have closed last December and a new one should have been opened in January. On the one hand the Prime Minister complains about the length of the session. On the other hand he boasts about the number of bills that were passed last session. He mentioned 83 as the figure. I will wager right now that not many members of this House of Commons could name more than six of those 83 bills that were passed. There were only about six that were of major importance. It is not quantity but quality that is desirable.

I recognize that we are living in an age where everything has to be instant. We have to have instant news. Now we want instant legislation. This will lead us astray. We should take our time in debating matters which are going to affect the people of this country for many years to come, in order to make sure that mistakes are not made.

Over the years I have been in this chamber I have been unable to discover a bill that has been unduly delayed. If a longer time is spent on one bill than on another it means that bill is controversial, badly drafted, or will have ill effects unless modified. I have reviewed this situation time and time again. I have discovered that 40 to 60 pieces of legislation are passed through the house in a normal session of parliament. The restrictions that are going to be imposed by the government will have a bad effect on this institution.

[Mr. Churchill.]

I am sorry I do not have time to dwell on this matter, but I want to mention two other things that are closely related to it. We talk about this institution failing to meet the desires of the younger generation. The younger generation is very vocal. It is well educated, which is a good thing, and the earlier it accepts the responsibilities which some of us have carried for many years the better I will like it. I want to become an armchair critic, to be able to say "You are not doing things right down there in the House of Commons." However, I may say I will not start criticizing my own party; I will start criticizing the other parties.

Our young people have a great future ahead of them, and I hope we will turn over this institution to them unimpaired and in good working order. In this connection I would point out that even as attentive an observer as George Bain in an article in this morning's *Globe and Mail* says that half the voters are under 25 years of age. This is something that was written by Peter Newman 18 months ago and has been slavishly copied by every newspaper in the country ever since. All you have to do, Mr. Speaker, is look to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics to find that 50 per cent of the people of Canada are under 25 years of age, but not all of them vote, at least not yet. We have not gone into the cradle, and if you look at the voting population of the country you find that those who are age 35 and over comprise 67 per cent of that population. One does not need a research staff to discover this; it is given in the D.B.S. figures.

The other matter I wish to mention is the suggestion which has been put forward that the proceedings of this chamber should be brought more closely to the attention of the people of the country through the medium of television. I think this is something that is coming, not that it is important how we appear on television. If entrance to this chamber were based on our appearance on television I think 90 per cent of us would be excluded immediately. What is important is our attention to debates in the chamber, the arguments we advance and our attendance, not to mention the manner in which we look after the problems of our constituents. However, it has been suggested that our proceedings be televised. Instead of television I would be inclined to start with radio, because television in its technical aspects is still in a very primitive state. It requires miles of cable, scores of lights and much cumbersome equipment.