

member, if he is anxious to discharge his duties faithfully and well, to inform himself on the various subjects which he has to legislate upon? Take, for example the present session there are some very important measures to come before the House. There is this treaty with France which we will have to look over very carefully, there is the transportation question which will require the most earnest consideration of this House and there are other things of great importance that we will have to inform ourselves upon. If we have such hours as we have at present what time has any member to qualify himself or legislate properly on these questions? If we were to meet, say at nine o'clock, or ten o'clock in the morning—I do not see why we should not meet at half past nine—then meet again at two, the same as we do on Wednesdays now, then meet at the ordinary hour of eight o'clock and adjourn at half past ten o'clock, we would have far more time to do our work, and it strikes me that the work would not only be better done, but perhaps more quickly done than it is at the present time. It is not only the private members who have these difficulties to contend with, but if the private members have these difficulties how much more are the difficulties which the Prime Minister, the members of the government and the leader of the opposition have? Our leader is not as young as he used to be. We all have every confidence in his ability. We are looking forward, every one of us, to years of service for us, we want him still to carry our banner and to carry it to victory, but if we exact the very last ounce of strength from him by requiring him to sit here all night, how can we expect that he will remain at the head of affairs for years to come, as we hope he will? He has to be here and watch every movement; he has to be here every hour in the day, or should be while the session is going on. How is he to prepare addresses? He is expected to speak on every subject. How can we expect him to do all this and do it faithfully and well. The members of the government are in exactly the same position. They have to receive deputations and they have to speak on almost every subject that comes before us. We cannot expect Herculean tasks from these men because they are human as well as ourselves, and why should not we restrict the hours and give them a little more chance to prepare themselves for the performance of their duties? Take the case of the leader of the opposition. He is, perhaps—and I am not going behind the boards to say it—one of the best members we have in this House—certainly one of the best members they have on the opposition side. I am not afraid to say it; I am proud of the leader of the opposition. We must have a good opposition. An opposition is a fine thing for a government be-

cause a government is sometimes too strong unless it is held in check by a good opposition. It is apt to do things which are not exactly right. I am anxious that we should have a good, strong, competent opposition, and I hope that the present leader of the opposition will be maintained in his strength so that he can conduct his party not to victory, but to a long period of usefulness in this House. I remember that not only last session but the session before, the leader of the opposition became completely exhausted by the labours that were exacted from him. He had to go away for a week at a time to recuperate, and he came back with renewed strength. I do not think we should exact such labours from the leader of the opposition as to exhaust his strength in the performance of his public duty. Scarcely a session passes but one or two of our members are called away suddenly by death for the very reason that they are required to exert themselves for too long a time and too late into the night. The majority of the members of this House are not accustomed to late hours; they are men who have been born and brought up in a Christian country. We work during the day and rest during the night, and I do not see why we should depart from that good old rule.

It is not only the government, the opposition and others that I am concerned about, but what about the officers of the House? Take for example, the little pages, thirteen in number, who range in age from 10 to 13 years. Should we not look after their interest too? We have a law on the statutes of Ontario defining what a child is. It says that a child is a person under the age of 14 years. The age of these little page boys range from ten to thirteen years, and they consequently come under the category of children. This law also states that no child shall be employed in any factory in Ontario for more than six hours a day and not more than 60 hours in a week. But in this great factory of words and phrases we violate that law and compel these little boys to stay here from 12 to 16 hours a day, and when we have morning sittings they remain here double that time. These little page boys are orphans or the sons of widows, and they are here only because necessity compels them to be here, and when the session lasts six or seven months these boys are deprived of the opportunity of going to school. Is it not time we should take this into consideration as well? What about the other officers of the House? What about the reporters, and in that I include not only the 'Hansard' reporters, but the reporters in the gallery, who, although they are not officers of the House, are a most valuable adjunct, and they should be considered just as well as any one else. When we have sat here all night or until six o'clock or seven o'clock in the morning, what about the reporters?