

Standing Orders

in the constituency that I have the honour to represent in this house. On resuming a debate on a similar question, in 1927, he said as reported at page 1345, of *Hansard* of March 18, 1927:

"On one occasion after the war, in 1920, I happened to be in the House of Commons, and the proceedings were most interesting to me. Asquith had been elected for one of the Scottish seats, Paisley, I think it was. He was introduced on that day, and he gave notice of a motion to consider the state of Europe after the war. That was surely a big issue. The motion came up the following day by mutual agreement between Lloyd George and Asquith. Asquith spoke for thirty minutes on the state of Europe after the war, and Lloyd George followed and closed the debate in twenty-five minutes. Surely a member can say all he has to say in less than forty minutes. I was in favour of making the limit thirty minutes. The best English ever heard in this house was spoken under closure, in twenty-minute speeches. The speeches were to the point, couched in excellent language, went to the root of the question, and delivered, I may say, with warmth and eloquence for fear of the guillotine. I say to the house, let us be practical. We say that we model our rules upon the English pattern. In England they have reduced materially the length of speeches. They do their business,—yes, and they administer the affairs of a great empire in rather short sessions of the house. Why should we be provincial in this matter? Let us imitate the great mother of parliaments; let us be broad-minded and businesslike.

I think that these considerations which were brought before the house, in 1927, could apply today for better reasons than those which were given in 1927.

The question of shortening the length of time of speeches in this house should be welcomed by the members of all parties. If we do not reach an agreement about the way of debating our problems, we are going to see the development of a by-product of discussions—I mean the filibuster. The filibuster is in great honour in the United States. By definition it is a way of preventing a government from adopting the legislation proposed to the country for the good of the country.

Mr. Cruickshank: Not necessarily.

Mr. Fraser: Good or bad.

Mr. Boisvert: It may bring satisfaction to some members and to some party of the opposition's side. It may be very pleasing for a party or for a member to see that they are or he is restricting legislation day by day, speech by speech, and inch by inch. But we are not elected for such a purpose. We are elected to make laws for the good of the country. We are elected to pass legislation which is supposed to affect the wealth of the nations.

Mr. Cruickshank: Like pipe lines.

Mr. Boisvert: By filibustering we do not achieve that aim of doing good for the country. To those who like filibustering I will say that, in the long run, it ruins the confidence of the people in the democracy.

Mr. Cruickshank: Oh, oh.

Mr. Boisvert: It brings ill effects to parties in the opposition.

An hon. Member: And to the government.

Mr. Boisvert: For many years we have been offered various ways of shortening the debates and shortening the sessions. I will say that Mr. Beauchesne—who is so often cited by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles)—in 1943, in the preface to his third edition of his book on parliamentary rules and forms, recommended modifying our system in order to make it more elastic and better for the house. Mr. Beauchesne in his third edition wrote this:

"The procedure of the House of Commons was simplified by the amendments made to the standing orders in the session of 1927, but there are still certain deficiencies and it is imperative that special orders be adopted if the house wants further to expedite the passage of legislation."

It was imperative at that time that we should take further steps to improve the procedure in this house. Some good suggestions were made then. He recommended that an attempt be made to reach agreement between the various parties so that speeches could be shortened and debate reduced to a few hours of debatable subjects. If we are to take days and days, weeks and weeks and months and months discussing matters, as we did last session when dozens of speeches were made repeating the same thing, I do not think it will be good for this parliament. We live in a country where speed is the main thing. When everything goes fast, we in this parliament should not have to sit and listen for long hours to the discussion of matters which are of no interest even before the debate is closed.

For two months last session we discussed certain subjects but during this session we have heard nothing about them. That indicates that the interest which seemed so apparent toward the end of last session has faded. This has been the case with many other debates. I am strongly in favour of the resolution introduced by the hon. member for Halton because I have faith in democracy, faith in freedom of speech and in freedom of discussion.

No one has said anything to convince me that it is the intention of this resolution to