

*Motion for Concurrence in Report*

mentioned as yet, namely that many of the private members of the house of Westminster, the mother of parliaments, were most concerned over the fact that the mad rush toward efficiency and expedition had destroyed some of the values of the democratic process which they had keenly desired to retain. Nor had they gained any real alternative.

This caveat was filed by the committee last year and it appears in the report. We also suggested that in approaching this whole subject, Canadian conditions and practice must be kept in mind. Efficiency and expedition are all very well. Mussolini said he had made the trains run on time. But he did a great many other things, in the country over which he ruled as dictator for so many years, which were most repugnant to us, and still are.

In our analysis of the proposals before us we must be careful not to be carried away by the wild winds of expedition, efficiency, processing, computerization. Those are fine words, but they contain within them the essence of great danger to the process of democracy. Every year more countries have, in the sacred name of efficiency, scrapped or altered their parliamentary institutions so that they are no longer able to reflect honestly and effectively the views of the people of the land. Each year we find the countries which possess truly democratic institutions, dwindling in number. It is not enough for the government to come to us and say: We like this, or that, recommendation because it guarantees that in the course of a year we shall be able to program what we feel is essential for the government of this country. Mr. Speaker, no government is entitled to say that it is a reservoir of all that is good, wise and intelligent. Merely because it has access to the sprawling bureaucracy which inhabits this country and can produce a program of legislation is no reason at all for the government to suppose that we in this house, members of opposition parties and private members on the government side alike, should refrain from challenging, examining and scrutinizing its proposals free of the inhibitions which, for example, the proposed rule 16-A would inflict upon them.

I wish to deal for a minute or so with the advantages, in terms of parliamentary time, which are likely to result from the proposals made by the committee. It is my submission that, quite apart from the proposed rule 16-A, the proposals as a whole would provide for the use of the government and the house approximately 50 days more per session than

are now available. As a result of the elimination of the financial resolution I would say that in an average year 20 days additional debating time would be gained. The elimination of the budgetary resolutions would save another five or six days. Thirteen days have been cut from the total of 38 days which were available for supply. In addition, the fact that less emphasis is being placed on second reading would, in normal circumstances, make available an additional eight or ten days. No longer will it be necessary for members of this house considering second reading of a bill to say that, having accepted the principle on second reading, they are bound by its terms and can no longer challenge the measure. Since second reading will be just another step in the legislative process, I am confident from my experience in this house that at least 10 or 12 days will be saved in each session. Thus, as a result of these proposals, many of them emanating from this side of the house, approximately 50 extra days will be available, in addition to those available in the past for debating government proposals and other measures with which the house might wish to deal.

● (9:30 p.m.)

But that is not enough, apparently. The government demands more. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) mentioned the omnibus amendments to the Criminal Code. I ask the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) and his colleagues what assessment they would make of the time required to debate this measure in the house during the legislative program of a session? It may well be, of course, that the Prime Minister, who has been trying for the last year to lead parliament out of the bedrooms of the nation, where he unfortunately feels it has spent too long, may feel that this year has been a very long year. I would of course point out to him that having introduced a measure, it led him on to greater heights, and then it languished and withered on the vine.

This year, of course, was the in year for elections. The right hon. gentleman thought this would be an excellent time to have an election, but of course this was bound to take up a good part of the year. Nevertheless, being an impatient man he might very well say, "I think this bill should be through all its stages in two days," and there is nothing to stop the government from engaging in a practice which would lead to this being done,