

first, the general disposition of members to close at a reasonable hour. We might put some dependence on that disposition. As has been suggested, in the budget debate, which usually comes on early in the session, or in the debate on the address, no harm would be done if the sitting now and then exceeded eleven o'clock. A member might be able to conclude his remarks if he were allowed to speak for half an hour or so after eleven o'clock, but with a rule in force for adjournment at eleven he would have to wait until the next day. I do not agree with the statement of the hon. member for Macleod (Mr. Coote), which is very often repeated in the press, as to time being wasted in this House. I admit that a certain amount of time is unavoidably lost in parliament, but it has often struck me that newspaper editors in criticising the members of the House of Commons for waste of time might very well look over their own papers and see how much space is wasted by Jiggs pictures and things of that sort. Having regard to the extent of this country, some members representing constituencies which are larger than some independent countries in Europe, does this parliament waste any more time—indeed, in view of the business to be done, does it waste as much time—as the township council, the city council, the county council and the provincial legislatures? My own honest opinion is that we do not waste any more time in proportion to the extent of our business than they do; and we pay closer and better attention to the affairs of the country than is generally the case in other legislative bodies. Undoubtedly a certain amount of time is wasted; that has always been true and it will continue to be so. But time is wasted at meetings of boards of trade and other bodies as well. I have no hesitation in saying that, if we are tied down to a hard and fast rule to adjourn at eleven o'clock every night, we shall waste far more time than we should if we were allowed some latitude and some room for the exercise of judgment and common sense on both sides; for I am sure it is the general desire of members throughout the House to stop at a reasonable time.

Mr. LAPOINTE: There is no doubt that in any change of this kind there are arguments pro and con. There is much in what my hon. friend from Frontenac-Addington and my hon. friend from Quebec South have said, to the effect that a rule for adjournment at eleven o'clock might not help to expedite the business of the House. I trust, however, that other rules which we shall adopt will compensate for whatever disadvantages might

result from this one. This rule is rather in the interests of common sense and of the health of members. I agree to a large extent with what my hon. friend from Macleod has said, and I am glad he has given a description of the work of a member of parliament. So many people in the country think that we all come here for a holiday, but a member's task is tedious. It might very well be called a drudgery; it is work that impairs the health and, as the hon. gentleman has said, makes family life impossible. I do not however quite agree with the hon. gentleman in his suggestion that we should begin at two o'clock in the afternoon. This has been tried on Wednesdays for some time but it has not worked very well. And as a matter of fact, although it stood as a rule it has never been observed.

Mr. STEVENS: It has always been observed except in the last two years.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Oh, I think for a longer time than that. Let me take my own case by way of illustration, unpleasant as it is for one to be personal. We work from nine to ten in the morning and we have to look after the affairs of the departments, receiving delegations, carrying on the business of council, and so forth. As has been said, ministers are expected to be in their seats and in fact we try to do so. I do not see therefore how we could very well be expected to come to the House at two o'clock every day. I may say that the meetings of this very committee, in which I was interested, I found it simply impossible to attend. I certainly think that three o'clock in the afternoon is early enough for the opening of the House. An hon. member has made a remark about Friday and Monday evenings, saying that we practically lose these sittings because of the absence of many Ontario and Quebec members. That is not my experience. My experience is that we have done much more work on Friday and Monday evenings than we do on other days. The absence of the members referred to does not reflect itself in any curtailment of business.

Mr. HEAPS: That is a compliment to the other provinces.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I will say it is a compliment to my hon. friend, who is very diligent in his attendance, as well as to all who remain here. As I said, these rules have been carefully considered, and while there may be objections to some of them, they are on the whole, I think, such as will lead to a better parliamentary life.