

*Procedure and Organization*

that I do not think this house or this country would ever tolerate.

These procedures to which I have referred have, I think, been shown at their best since last December. There were numerous occasions when the government was faced with the task of asking for unanimous consent to revert to certain matters for disposition, or when the government required certain matters to be expedited for policy reasons or in the interest of the national good. On such occasions the government approached the representatives of the other parties and agreements were made. This happened over and over again.

I also call to mind the situation that developed as a result of the opposition parties agreeing to sacrifice certain days that should have been dedicated to debating problems which members of the opposition, and members on the government side for that matter, thought should be ventilated and dealt with. At these times private members said to the government, in effect: "We know there are difficulties, that time is now of the essence. We will waive two of the six days on which we are entitled to debate the budget." Those days then became days on which government business was conducted. It was not as if those days were added, as they could have been under existing orders, to the number of opposition days.

As I say, private members have been prepared to accede to certain courses of action in order to meet what they thought were the needs of the government. As long as this is done without damage to the welfare of the country and as long as it still permits us to discharge our responsibilities, not only as private members but as members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, we are prepared to take this course of action again.

Then again, on other occasions the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), myself, other members of this party and members of the other parties suggested granting additional sitting hours in order that the government might complete certain business and send it to the other place to be dealt with.

I am not going to recite all of these occasions; they are well known to members of this house and to Your Honour. Under the new standing orders members of the opposition have days that belong to the opposition and on which they can move motions touching upon many of the problems that afflict us, problems with which the government has neither the knowledge nor the wit to deal.

[Mr. Baldwin.]

The course of action we took in this regard was during the time when we believed we were approaching the pursuit of a new direction of thought which would make the House of Commons different from what it was in the past. We understood we were going to begin our deliberations at a certain time and were going to end them at a certain time. In the belief that this was what was meant and that certain measures would be dealt with within that period, during the course of some two or three weeks we agreed to extension of the hours. We sat late, and we sat late quite frequently, so that government business could be expedited; and in fact it was.

I am not attempting to deny that there was one occasion, the debate on the proposed amendments to the Criminal Code, when we took what was, in my opinion, perhaps a somewhat longer time than was required. But this place is a forum for the reflection of the views of a substantial portion of the people of Canada, and the hon. members of the Creditistes party, genuinely believing that they had a mandate to oppose certain of the provisions contained in the amendments to the Criminal Code, conceived it to be their duty to debate them rather extensively. I do not fault them for that, though, as I say, I personally did not think the debate required the time it took.

We must remember that we are 264 representatives assembled here to reflect the views of the people of Canada. We are the people of Canada with all their warts and defects. We are no better and no worse. We reflect their thinking. If one group in this house genuinely and sincerely believes it has the duty to attempt to prevent a government measure from being passed—although in this case I did not agree—then I think that group has that right. The question of what is reasonable is another issue, of course. Apart from that one occasion I think the work of this house has proceeded harmoniously and reasonably.

What does the government think will be the spirit that will prevail next session? Let me say at once that I am not making any threats; I merely recognize the hard facts of human nature. Let me contemplate what is going to be the situation next year. If the government persists in this ill advised and improper attempt to obtain the full package contained in proposed standing order 75 I am afraid that, knowing human nature for what it is, we shall not see prevailing here the same measure of harmony, understanding and co-operation that has existed in the past. And