

its legislative program in the speech from the throne when that speech is presented. Then it brings forward its bills for discussion by the house and I have indicated the number that are on the order paper. It introduces the estimates. However, the time that is spent on legislation and on the estimates is something that is solely within the hands of the opposition.

**Mr. Matheson:** May I ask the minister if he would not agree that what Canada needs is a better opposition?

**Mr. Churchill:** May I say this to the hon. member: You will learn if you stay there, and you will be there for a long time. Perhaps the hon. member and his friends will become a responsible opposition with several more years of training, and we are prepared to give it to them.

I have heard from members of this house and I have read in the newspapers that the government should bring down its legislation and that the government should get on with its business. However, the government cannot do more than put the business before this house. The opposition controls the time spent on it.

**An hon. Member:** Obstruction.

**Mr. Hellyer:** You should read the rest of that editorial.

**Mr. Churchill:** If just prior to Christmas the opposition could pass five bills in one and a half hours, why can they not pass the main estimates for this year in, say, 15 days as was done in 1949?

**Mr. McIlraith:** The government has never submitted them.

**Mr. Pearson:** You have not brought them in.

**Mr. McIlraith:** You refused to call the house when you should have called it.

**Mr. Crestohl:** Six billion dollars.

**Mr. Churchill:** I want to make one point very clear and I hope the public of Canada will realize it and correct some of the erroneous editorials that appear.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**An hon. Member:** Like today's?

**Mr. Churchill:** The government does not control the length of a session of the House of Commons; it is controlled by the opposition. In the session of 1960-61 the opposition spent 60 days in discussing the main estimates.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame.

**Mr. Churchill:** In the session of 1953-54 when we were the official opposition, 30 days sufficed for a discussion of the estimates. That

*Alleged Lack of Government Leadership*

is the difference between a responsible opposition and an irresponsible opposition.

**Mr. Robichaud:** In those days there were more responsible estimates.

**Mr. Crestohl:** You will become a responsible opposition.

**Mr. Churchill:** The responsibility of the House of Commons may be divided into three main sections. The first is the business that is set by the rules. I refer to the fixed debates, including the debate on the speech from the throne, the budget debate, the debate on supply motions and things of that nature set by the rules. We have no control at all over that business. If ten days are allowed by the rules for the speech from the throne, the opposition will use the ten days, unless it is very responsible and cuts the time short. The same thing is true with respect to the budget debate.

**Mr. Pearson:** We did that.

**Mr. Churchill:** The second main division is legislation. We bring forward the bills. They are discussed in the house. The third main division is the passing of the estimates or the voting of supply to Her Majesty. These are the three main divisions. Time is allotted among those three divisions. I suggest that there is no control whatsoever in the hands of the government with regard to the time spent on that business of the House of Commons unless, as was done by the Liberal government in 1956, freedom of speech was denied to the House of Commons by the imposition of closure. No one of the three parties in opposition is free from the need for some self-examination with regard to obstructing the business of this house. I would suggest to the New Democratic party that they should look a second time at the 500 divorce bills which are sitting on the order paper. Because of obstruction not one single divorce measure was passed in the year 1962. That is not the government's fault. We bring the business before the house; the opposition determines whether or not it shall be passed.

I suggest that the business of the house has been properly organized. Let me say to the leader of the Social Credit party that when a bill is introduced into the house in the resolution stage, the resolution is passed, first reading is given and the bill is then distributed. You cannot immediately go ahead to a second reading unless there is unanimous consent. Then you have second reading stage, followed by consideration in committee of the whole house, and you cannot immediately have third reading of the bill unless the house gives unanimous consent. Consequently you cannot start with a bill and keep going with it until you end it, because of these changes