

Procedure and Organization

of the use of those funds for research assistance is often different with various members. In one case it may take one house leader back to the days of the Colonial Laws Validity Act and in another case it may give assistance in writing a letter to a constituent. One must at the same time realize that these rules are part of an over-all program to try to modernize the way of doing business in this house.

If those hon. members opposite who have participated in this debate say we do not need modernization and programming, they should fire away and say so to the public of this nation. I say we need programming and modernization very badly and we need it now. If hon. members have a role to play in pursuing a given subject matter, a given department, a phase or activity of the house or government and are required to attend a particular committee, when that debate is called in the House of Commons, on estimates or any other aspect of our work, if the time is programmed in advance so the number of speakers from any party who can rise is limited, for example, to one frontbencher and one backbencher from that committee who has become knowledgeable and specialized in that particular field, I have no hesitation in saying that is a step forward.

The stand taken by the Creditiste party on the abortion amendments to the Criminal Code, which was repeated many times, could have been adequately handled by one or two of their members. I have no hesitation in saying we wasted time that could have been used on very important legislation. It is folly to carry out business in that way.

Mr. Benjamin: What legislation was held up?

Mr. Peters: We are going to be here for two weeks, so let's get on with it.

Mr. Jerome: If the time in this chamber is limited, what will happen is that the length of the debate will diminish but the quality will increase. That is what we should strive to do. We should arrange our affairs so that the paramount feature of the debate is its quality and not its length. I personally do not feel this nation is being served by a debate featuring only its length. That is what took place in that filibuster that has been talked about so much. It was a performance that had as its focus of attention one singular point, its length. I cannot feel that the needs of the nation were in any way served by that particular performance. The sooner we move to eliminate that kind of thing and require a

debate to be meaningful and to the point, the better off we will be.

The tragic manifestation of our inability to look at the composite picture of this problem is in respect of the youth of our country who have been referred to so frequently. I said this in December when talking about the rule changes proposed at that time and I say it again. It has been mentioned here this afternoon that if democracy does not rest in this institution and if resentment and opposition cannot be expressed in words, they will be expressed in violence. I think that is a very important point. It is capable of many interpretations.

The youth of our country are a tremendously powerful force in our nation. They are protesting and demonstrating in public. There are riots and insurrection—in our universities. When that kind of performance takes place, we must wake up to the fact that the youth of our country have the power to change our society and way of life. In addition to possessing this power, they also possess the inclination.

I believe we all respect this institution. If we do, we must give the youth of our country the sense that change can take place here and that we can keep pace with the needs of our nation. If we do not do that, their expression will be one of protest against this chamber, as well as disinterest and hostility.

We have a solemn duty to encourage the youth of our country to participate in the parliamentary way of life. Before we can do that we must show them that this is a place where they can make a meaningful contribution. This must be a place that will command their respect and attention. This is not a place which simply has roots in the past that will never die, an institution built solely on tradition, but a place where we are striving to do a good job of administering the affairs of the citizens of our country.

We have the opportunity to demonstrate that this is not a parliament that intends at any cost to preserve and cling to those anachronistic traditions which tie our hands and hold us back from carrying out the business of the nation. We have an opportunity to demonstrate the revolutionary spirit present in the youth of our country today. That has been an essential ingredient of every great nation. It is present in the youth of our nation and we do not have to look very far to see it.

That revolutionary spirit has a place here and we are fooling ourselves if we think the youth will not demonstrate this spirit when