

are inaudible to about nine-tenths of the members of the House and are not really available to any member until next day. I think that our rules might be well amended in this respect. On the other hand, I do not believe that any amendment of the rules will avoid what is sometimes called waste of time. In a deliberative assembly composed of over 200 members, there will be a certain waste of time so long as human nature remains what it is; no revision of rules will prevent it. We must also remember that parliament is a place for debate and discussion, as its very name implies. It is proper that every member of the House should have reasonable opportunity to discuss any matter that he thinks is in the public interest. It would be very undesirable to bring about any condition of affairs in which that would not be practicable. So far as the working of the present rules is concerned, I would point out that last session, which occupied exactly four months and in which a considerable amount of work was done is proof that under the rules as they are at present, the House of Commons has done and can do its work within a reasonable time. However, for the reasons I have given, and especially in view of certain amendments which I think might properly be made, I concur in the motion of the Prime Minister.

So the House will admit that not later than the 14th December, 1909, the present Prime Minister admitted that the rules in existence were practically all that was required for the carrying on of the business. He had no objection to the appointment of a select committee to go over the matter for the purpose of dealing with the one particular rule in regard to questions, but generally speaking, they were all of a satisfactory character. We see the very great change that has taken place in his mind since that time. I will take the liberty, if I have the indulgence of the House, to give more quotations from the discussion which took place upon that occasion. There are several wings of the Conservative party, and we have one member of this House who represents what I might call the independent wing of the party. I am sorry that he has been away for the last few days. The hon. member for South York (Mr. Maclean) has been a member during the fourteen years that I have sat in this House and he has been one of the outspoken members of the Conservative party. He has been the pioneer in the advocacy of a great many measures. A great many reforms have been suggested by him in advance of their time. We of the fourth estate, of the newspaper fraternity, know that the hon. member for South York is a newspaper man, a constant reader of newspapers and that there is no better informed member of the House today. He is a man who is posted on all that is going on in the great republic to the south of us and when important reforms were brought about in the states of

Mr. MARCIL (Bonaventure).

the American Union, in connection with railways, telephones, public utilities, Government or state ownership, we were sure to have something from the hon. member for South York and to have it in no uncertain way. Under the old rules a member was allowed, on the calling of the Orders of the Day, to read long extracts from newspapers and comment thereon. That was one of the privileges that was done away with by the revised rules and we now have a rule which permits an hon. member to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a question of urgent public importance. After the present Prime Minister had spoken, the hon. member for South York was heard further and he gave the free and unbiased opinion of the Conservative party. With the permission of the House I shall read what he said:

I hope that this committee will in no way attempt to interfere with the liberties of Parliament, and especially with the liberties of individual members of this House. In the United States to-day, we see that the popular chamber has lost its liberties, and has passed under the domination of a Speaker who is now known as a czar, and consequently that chamber, which should have been the model chamber throughout the world as a place of debate, has lost its prestige and its power, that power having passed to another body. I do not wish to see a repetition of that history in this country. We have revised our rules to a certain extent with the result that business has been facilitated. I am glad to see business facilitated, but I put in a protest now against any interference with the liberty of this House and the right of free discussion. It is a great right, and if we once part with it we may not get it back. The liberties of this House have always been upheld—at least, so I have read—by the Liberal party, and I hope that that party will be the last to in any way interfere with those liberties.

These are the remarks of the hon. member for South York, who boasted that he did not submit to the party whip and did not attend the party caucuses. His electors must have had a high opinion of the stand he took, because of the rural constituencies of Ontario the hon. member had the largest majority of any Conservative elected in the province. Another important member of the House spoke on this important question, I refer to the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Foster), who has gone to the Antipodes in the discharge of his public duties and we all wish him success and a happy return to this House. If we do not all agree with the Minister of Trade and Commerce, still we must all admit that he speaks forcibly and eloquently. The hon. gentleman spoke on this occasion briefly, but his words are pregnant; he said: