

Motion for Concurrence in Report

that the government may attempt to bring unfair pressure upon hon. members of this house to pass, or bring to an earlier decision than need normally be the case, the debate on this important matter now before the house. I suggest that has been done deliberately in order to bring undue pressure on hon. members of this house.

There is one area in this debate where, respectfully, I disagree with my leader and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. They considered with horror the idea of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) sitting by himself and considering various measures. I think that might be very useful; it might be an improvement. Sitting by himself the hon. member might argue with himself and question the soundness of some of his own decisions. He might even be persuaded to bring in both a minority and majority report, all on his own. More than that, he might infect some of his colleagues, including the one sitting right in front of him, with good sense, and they might be persuaded to have some doubts about their own infallibility.

The debate has been useful for another reason. We have had produced before our wondering eyes large batches of ministers—ministers who normally would be in their offices working hard to execute their duties.

An hon. Member: They were ordered out of the house.

Mr. Baldwin: They are ministers, as we have every reason to believe, who have not been coming into the house as often as they wished. They are here now—I do not mean to drive any of them away—and that is one worthy contribution the Prime Minister has made in this debate. Having spoken here tonight the Prime Minister, so to speak, produced these ministers before our wondering eyes.

An hon. Member: Will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Baldwin: I would be willing to allow 15 minutes of the time available to me to be used for the question period—if that is the suggestion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

In his discussion the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said a good many things with which most of us can agree. In his professorial remarks he said things which are consistent with what the committee suggested, with what my leader suggested and with what the

[Mr. Baldwin.]

hon. members for Winnipeg North Centre and Shefford suggested. I do not think it is necessary for me to deal with those particular areas.

The institutions of democracy throughout the world have all been open to varying measures of criticism over the last few years, and certainly with some justification. Certainly all representative groups must conduct their business in the light of today's conditions and the conditions likely to prevail tomorrow.

• (9:20 p.m.)

There is much to be done, much to change, much to alter. As a matter of fact it is no secret that many of the proposals which are reflected today in the committee report have been suggested by hon. member of this house in past years, some by members of the opposition parties in and out of this chamber, in the procedure committees of last year and of previous years. For example, the proposal with relation to the elimination of financial resolutions, the proposal to place more emphasis on standing committees, the proposal to attach less importance to second reading, the suggestion that unanimous decisions by the proceedings committee concerning the allotment of time for individual items should be bringing, the idea that there should be regular sittings of the house—as one goes through the litany of proposals contained in the fourth and fifth reports he finds many proposals and ideas which have been advanced from this side of the house, and, as has been said, we have really no quarrel with the majority of the recommendations. We might disagree with some of them in detail but, basically, we do not quarrel with all of them.

Mention has been made of the committee which went to England. I agree with my hon. friend who leads this party that the kind of procedures we want in this house are those which are native to our institutions, native to this country and adapted to the fact that we have a federal system. They should take into account that as individual members we represent areas which are distinctive from geographic, ethnographic and economic points of view. What may be good for the United Kingdom is not necessarily good for Canada, and I think this should be made clear. We did find some practices in the United Kingdom which appeared to be reasonable and we dealt with certain of these in the report which was made last year, part of which was carried over. But we were careful to include in that report a statement which has not been