

a change in the rules of this House to limit the speeches of private members to thirty minutes except by unanimous consent. The result would be beneficial in every way, it would expedite the sessional work, and would increase the respect in which this House is held by our people from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and last, but not least, such a rule would be of distinct benefit to the member himself whenever he had occasion to state his views. If the ideas contained in most of our speeches were compressed into thirty or forty minutes instead of being stretched out over two or more hours—

An hon. MEMBER: Sometimes five hours.

Mr. STANSELL: —those speeches would not so much remind us of the proverbial needle in a haystack.

Before touching on the budget proper, Sir, I desire to review briefly the general situation in this House. I do not propose to enumerate the platform pledges of the government and its supporters when the last parliament was dissolved; they are common knowledge. We were told that problems which pressed for solution could only be dealt with by a government commanding a strong majority in the House. We all know after the new parliament was convened why changes were made in the Speech from the Throne. We may take it for granted that the results of the election were a distinct disappointment to the Prime Minister, who selected his own time for appealing to the country, and who named the issues which made the election necessary. He himself was defeated as were most of his ministers. With the calling of the members together to decide which party should be given the responsibility of government, I have no fault whatever to find, but I do criticize the methods adopted to secure that deciding vote. We well know that in the speech which was put into the mouth of His Excellency the Governor General certain issues were included that were not before the country in October, but it was believed that they might be acceptable to certain groups in this House, and they were incorporated in the hope that a sufficient number of votes would be secured to enable the defeated party to carry on. Even that was not considered sufficient to ensure support; we were told by the Minister of Customs and Excise (Mr. Boivin) that voting for the Address itself would not be construed by the government as a vote of confidence! Under those conditions a small majority was secured by the government which now occupies the treasury benches.

It is possible to make water run up hill only in limited quantities, and by paying the price.

[Mr. Stansell.]

I submit to you, Sir, that under the conditions which prevailed when we were called together early in January there was only one precedent that this House should have established—that the group having the largest number of members should be given an opportunity to form a government. I know it was frequently stated by members and supporters of the present government that there was no way of harmonizing the views of the Conservative party with those entertained by other parties in the House. Well, the only proof was to make the effort. I assert without hesitation that, regardless of party considerations, when there are a number of groups in the House, the only sound and logical course to pursue is to give to the largest group the first opportunity to form a government. Then if that largest group in the Speech from the Throne enunciated a policy that failed to secure the approval of a sufficient number of hon. members, the second largest group should be given an opportunity to see what they could do, and in case of their failure we might appeal to the country again. But in giving the second largest group control we are attempting to make water run up hill, and for this unnatural action we must pay the price.

A part of the price in this instance will be the practical annihilation of the Progressive or Independent party. Like myself, Mr. Speaker, you were here during the sessions of the last parliament; we well know how often and how ably members of the Independent group to my left contributed to the work of the House and frequently offered constructive criticism. But let me point out to you, Sir, that during this session the proverbial oyster is a shrieking siren as compared to the silence in that corner of the House. The charge has frequently been made in the past that the Independent or Progressive party are nothing more than camouflaged Liberals. I was never inclined to adopt that view, but rather gave them some credit for being an independent party. From one end of Canada to the other to-day, however, you would have difficulty in making people believe that that is not so, and that is a part of the price the Progressive party will pay for the mistake made early in January. But, Sir, what concerns me most is the price the people of Canada must pay for the lack of business administration, the disturbance of industry and the general uncertainty prevailing at present, which will continue to obtain while this government, with its present policy, retains power.

It is impossible to speak in this budget debate without referring to protection. I am always interested in the arguments adduced