

*Rules of the House*

fairs! In all seriousness, would it not be possible for us to agree to attend punctually at the hour of opening and devote our time to our parliamentary duties during the full duration of each day's sittings. I do not refer so much to attendance in this chamber, and being a new member I am not offering any advice, but I have noticed that in our committees we are punctual for the opening meetings, although afterwards we are often fifteen to twenty minutes late. Not only in this chamber but in the various committees it is most difficult to carry on our work because apparently we give too much attention to something that ought not to concern us and too little attention to the subject matter in hand. I do not know that the acoustics of this chamber can be improved to any very great extent, but certainly from either end it is most difficult to hear discussion that may be proceeding beyond the centre and nearer the chair. I believe that if we would give a little more serious thought to the business of the House we might accomplish much more within the present hours. Then we would have ample time for play and when the weather is fine we would be able to enjoy the beauties of Ottawa, for in the summertime I am told it is a very pretty place. I am not so busy at home during the summer season and with the kindly coöperation and hospitable generosity of local members and the ministers who desire to entertain those of us who are living here on the European plan and not on a flat rate, perhaps we could spend some part of the summer very profitably.

Mr. POWER: May I draw the attention of the committee to the fact that during the last nine years that I have been a member of this House no budget debate has been terminated before eleven o'clock at night. A great deal more progress is always made after that hour than at any other period of the day.

An hon. MEMBER: No.

Mr. POWER: I am calling the attention of members to that fact. It may be that some of us are not fully awake and in our best state of mind until after eleven o'clock. It seems to me that we will be prolonging the length of the session if we lay down any such hard and fast rule as that now under discussion. I am very much opposed to it and do not think that it should be adopted. If it does pass, and it is desired to have a fixed hour of adjournment, let us sit straight through from three o'clock in the afternoon until eleven o'clock at night, as is, I understand, the custom in Great Britain. We could very easily arrange

[Mr. Hay.]

that between six and eight o'clock only non-contentious measures would be brought up and that no votes would be taken either in committee or in the House during that period. It would be a comparatively easy matter to keep a quorum and we could get through a great deal of work. However, I put that forward only as an alternative suggestion in case the House decide to give up the good old practice of sitting as late as we can as long as we get our business done.

Mr. EDWARDS (Frontenac): What rule are we on?

The CHAIRMAN: Rule 2. The third rule is carried.

Mr. EDWARDS (Frontenac): That is putting the cart before the horse.

The CHAIRMAN: Rule 2 was allowed to stand.

Rule 2 agreed to.

Mr. EDWARDS (Frontenac): If the third rule is carried I cannot do anything more than enter my protest. I heartily agree with the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat. I am in entire agreement, as I am sure other members are, with the proposal that it would be advisable for this House to rise every evening not later than eleven o'clock. I do not think there is any difference of opinion as to that, but I do question very strongly the advisability of laying down a hard and fast rule to effect it. I believe it would take away, to a certain extent at least the liberties of the members and I believe it would not conduce to expediting business, for in many cases members would continue to talk on the principle, "Oh, well at eleven o'clock the sitting will be through anyway."

Mr. MARCIL: We are to have a rule governing the length of speeches.

Mr. EDWARDS (Frontenac): There are a sufficient number of members who would be prepared to talk forty minutes each and thus keep a debate going interminably. I do not think that a hard and fast rule for the adjournment of the House at eleven o'clock would make for despatch. Hon. members would simply keep an eye on the clock, knowing that at eleven o'clock the House would automatically adjourn, and they would just talk to kill time. That would not be in the interests of the country. The rule is absolutely unwise, and it would be an infringement of the liberties of members. In my judgment it is not in the best interest of Canada to adopt such a rule. Surely we can leave the adjournment of the House to two factors;