

*Business of the House*

is that legislation was not brought into the house and proceeded with from the very commencement of the session. Legislation was indicated in the speech from the throne and it has been delayed, with the result that we have amendments to lengthen the hours of sitting of the house.

I think an increase in the hours of sitting at this time is very desirable. I had hoped that this morning the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) might move an extension of the hours to midnight and possibly the abolition of one of the meal periods, because I felt that would give us sufficient time to debate the legislation we were considering and the other bills without having to do so in an exhausted state. There is a limit, Mr. Speaker, as you must know, and as all hon. members must know, beyond which the brain of the average man will not function coherently and intelligently.

**An hon. Member:** That is evident.

**Mr. Adamson:** If the hours of sitting go past a certain point the attention given to very important legislation before us is likely to be warped, and in my opinion the amendment that has been proposed provides exactly the length of sitting necessary without introducing the exhaustion factor which is so dangerous in passing any legislation. I say that one of the most dangerous things we have to face is legislation by exhaustion. I had hoped that a motion would be introduced by the Prime Minister so the hours could be extended and we would have an opportunity to continue the important debate in which the house has been engaged. It was suggested if the amendment was acceptable to the mover of what I shall call the exhaustion motion then we would agree, and as a matter of fact we made the suggestion that the hours spent so far in debating this whole question could be made up in other ways. That was not acceptable. Therefore I must emphasize, so far as this most important question is concerned, the danger inherent in our procedural practice.

At the commencement of every session there are long debates, the time spent on which could be more advantageously used if it were possible to set some dates on which various items of legislation would pass through the house. We would not find ourselves, as has been the case in other sessions since I joined the house, faced in the last week or two with some of the most important legislation. With time running out, faced with much that cannot be done, with many contentious bills before us, with frayed tempers, with all the other conditions which destroy the judgment of hon. members, fighting against a deadline as we are now

fighting against the deadline of Christmas, we are asked to pass important legislation.

I think the suggestion that has been made is reasonable. It will assist in every way a reasoned approach to a most contentious bit of legislation. I think it ill becomes the C.C.F. to suggest the exhaustion which this motion would impose and to which this amendment has been moved. I can remember that the last time this house sat through to the morning hours members of the C.C.F. made an ostentatious show of protest by bringing sandwiches into the chamber.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** And milk.

**Mr. Adamson:** And milk. I think such things lower the dignity of this honourable house. Either from bravado or from ostentation they took that form of registering their protest. Now they bring forward this motion, to which an amendment has been moved on which I am speaking, which would impose exhaustion. They have indicated by their previous actions that this is the sort of motion they would ordinarily protest against. This debate has not been a waste of time. It has been an interesting debate, though annoying to a lot of members.

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** On both sides.

**Mr. Adamson:** On both sides. The fact that it has been annoying is a good thing because out of this annoyance may come a better understanding and a better processing of legislation through the house, at proper stages and at proper times during the session. If it does nothing else than that it will have been worth while. The more annoying it is, the more exasperating it is, the more we realize that Christmas is nearer and nearer and Santa Claus is stuck in the chamber—

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** The best speech the hon. member ever made.

**Mr. Adamson:** The irritation which has been engendered may prove a lesson to the government so that in the sessions to come we may have an orderly progress of business through the house. Therefore this debate has been most important on that score.

There is another danger in this type of pressure that is being applied. Instead of coming here as an individual to represent his constituency, as a member of a profession, as one having a knowledge of certain business, as one ready to add to the collective wisdom so that he may become part of the voice of the Canadian people, a member is becoming part of a professional assembly. Members of parliament are becoming members of parliament first and citizens second.