

*Standing Orders*

What would be the result? The session would be prolonged almost indefinitely, but there would be no reason for criticizing those on the government side, if they decided to do so.

For five years I sat on the opposition side of the house, and to some extent they were happy years because we could express our sentiments on almost anything; we could get on our feet almost any time. However, as a man who has been loyal to his party I do not wish to make an issue of it because it is a good party with good leadership. The same thing applies just as forcibly to the other parties. The members belong to good parties with good leadership. For instance, sometimes I have had to follow the directive of the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Fournier) when he has said: "Joe, spare us one of your fine speeches today because we want to get through with the measure." I complied with the request, which was a fair one. I never spoke on these matters, and I have never regretted it. It is possible to have these limitations within the other parties, and it would make for better results in our deliberations.

This afternoon the member for Peel put forward some new aspects of the subject, and I admire him for it. However, he tried to strike quite a blow at the ministers by saying that before the orders of the day are called on many occasions they make lengthy statements to the house. If I correctly understand his party's views on several occasions they have blamed the government for not giving enough information, so I do not know where the ministers should begin or stop. After all that is the proper time for a minister to give the house information to answer questions, some of them asked the previous day. So far as I am concerned personally, I feel that the member for Peel is very glad of the information given. Under our system it is possible for the government not only to give information through members of the cabinet but also through private members who may express their sentiments, and this is always conducive to good legislation.

Although I do not believe in the motto I often hear it said that the primary duty of the opposition is to oppose. In my opinion that principle is not dynamic enough nor strong enough, it is too sterile, too static. The opposition has a duty to be more than passive. Without divulging any secrets I may say that when I was deputy speaker the fine old gentleman who was on my left used to say to me on several occasions that one of the great features of the Liberal party was that anything good propounded by the Conservative party or any other

party was made their own in no time. This could be one of the good features of the opposition parties too, and the mere role of opposing is not constructive enough to be helpful to that party.

Last year I was in favour of the sitting hours that we adopted, although in my own mind I was not convinced that it would be conducive to shortening the session. Unless we shorten the length of the speeches to at least thirty minutes, then I do not know where we would end. You cannot cut down the time of sitting, and at the same time maintain the length of the speeches without lengthening the session. It is humanly impossible. I say that quite sincerely. If we were not in favour of shortening the speeches we would come to the same situation we face in all sessions. Towards the end of the session, after we have had a general discussion on nearly all the measures and all the departments leaving only the statutory items, about which most of us can do nothing, we would have to stay here three or four weeks, sitting mornings, afternoons and nights, just as we have done in the past. This is a terrific ordeal for every one of us who has to stay until the end of the session. I repeat that if we want to modernize our procedure we must, to some extent, copy the British parliamentary system and adopt the suggestions in paragraphs (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) of the resolution.

We would not lose very much by adopting most of the British system. I do not mean that these changes should all be made this session. We should try to eliminate repetition. When I was the deputy speaker—I am speaking to you from my experience—the most difficult problem was to keep speakers on the subject. When we considered the estimates of the Department of National Defence, for example, we had a general discussion on the administration item which at times lasted for days. When we were considering the different items it took me all my time to keep members of parliament on the beam, as we say. You cannot make human nature other than it is—and it is a fine thing that it is so—and that illustrates to some extent the urgency for the allocation of time during the speech from the throne and the budget debate, as well as some important governmental measures on which a lot of leeway is given to the members of all parties to express their opinions but the number of speakers should be very limited. For instance, take the government party. On a certain measure two or three members will speak because they are familiar with the problem. The same principle should be applied in the same manner to the other parties. They all could

[Mr. Bradette.]