

Procedure and Organization

to the opposition, when a majority government is in power, the time for debate which is needed to point out the weaknesses of proposed legislation to the public through the press, in order that public opinion may bring pressure to bear on the government to correct those weaknesses and thus prevent bad legislation from passing into law.

I think every member of the house and all people in this country who pay attention to public affairs will agree that at a time when parliamentary schedules are becoming increasingly heavy, year by year, the parliamentary process should be speeded up if this can be done without denying to the opposition the means of enabling public opinion to bring pressure to bear to prevent a majority government from passing bad legislation into law.

The question facing us today is whether there is any way of doing this. I say that the answer is emphatically yes, and I am going to make three suggestions to cut down the time consumed by parliament without reducing the ability of the opposition to do the job it was elected to do.

The first suggestion deals with time allotted for speeches. The time allotted for individual speeches has not changed in any important fashion ever since the parliamentary session lasted no longer than four or five months a year, compared with a full year now. In those days it was generally considered that an oratorical performance was required by an hon. member to present his views adequately to the house. That was when time was of very little importance, but as we know today all of that has changed. In this day of the computer, space flights and instant replay, long-winded oratory is out and short factual presentations are in.

President Kennedy set the pattern for this new type of presentation when he made his inaugural address in 1961. He startled the governmental and political world by giving that most important address in no more than 1,200 words, which required no longer than 12 minutes to deliver. President Kennedy was fond of saying of speeches that if you cannot get your idea across in 20 minutes it becomes increasingly more difficult to do so after that.

• (3:10 p.m.)

President Lincoln was another example of a man who expressed himself very well and very clearly in very few words. I think we all remember that one of the most famous speeches known to mankind, the Gettysburg address, required less than two minutes to

deliver. We also remember the most famous speeches of Sir Winston Churchill. They were short. When you examine them you see that the words and phrases used were extremely simple. He gave the key to this whole presentation problem when asked how long it took him to prepare a speech. He answered, "It depends on the length of the speech. If I am to speak for two hours, it will take me ten minutes to prepare the speech; but if I am to make a ten minute speech, it will take me two days." I am convinced that in the future we must spend far more time preparing our presentations to the house and take up far less of the time of the house in making those presentations.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Hees: Therefore my first suggestion is that we do something that will not only greatly reduce the time taken by the house in carrying out the business of the country but will greatly improve the speeches made in the house. They will be more understandable; they will be better reported; they will have far more effect on the government. I suggest that we cut in half the time presently allotted for all speeches in the house. Instead of allowing ministers and leaders of opposition parties unlimited time to make their presentations, they should be allotted the same time as that allowed other hon. members, with ten minutes added. I believe the result of such a move would in itself reduce by at least one-third the time taken by the house to deal with the matters that come before it. In addition to greatly reducing the time spent in the house to deal with the business of the country, we would greatly increase the effectiveness of our presentations. They would of necessity be far better prepared. They would be far more in logical sequence. They would be far more easily understood.

I remember very clearly that when I first came to this house I was very impressed with the presentations made by Mr. M. J. Coldwell, the leader of the then C.C.F. party. I thought his speeches were a masterpiece of clarity. He always started by stating clearly the proposition with which he intended to deal, and then proceeded logically to develop it step by step and come to a conclusion. His speeches were short, they were always effective, they were always well understood by every member of the house.

My second suggestion deals with the long, typewritten speeches that members of the house all too often deliver, to the complete boredom of all other members. These