

Standing Orders

cure it. It is this. In the British house there are substantially only two political parties, although I must confess that in all fairness to the government we ought to mention at least under our breath the Liberal party, which does occupy some seats there now.

It is a vastly different business in the United Kingdom from what it is here. I am quite sure that the Prime Minister, his whip, and the Minister of Public Works, who handles the day-to-day affairs of the government leadership, can testify to the truth of what I say. When you have an official opposition, and then other groups to the left of that again to the number of two, and sometimes more than that, you have a problem which it is more difficult to solve than that in the United Kingdom, because there they have their procedure and their method of handling debates which have grown up through the years. I am quite certain that nothing in the way of too drastic solutions will reach the objective that we all have in mind, namely, the streamlining of the House of Commons.

When I first made a speech on this subject I fancied myself a regular Sir Galahad in these matters, and somehow or other I thought that all hon. members would gather round me after I had spoken and say, I heartily agree; we will bring in all these reforms. But I found there was hardly anybody who thought the same as I did. There were some of them who thought along the same line on some things I said and some of them supported me; nevertheless I found there was a wide division of ideas. When it came even to the question of how long we should sit in the house, I found that we never were able to get a completely unanimous opinion. But I want to say this to you, Mr. Speaker: I do not think we have to pass this resolution, or any other resolution, or have any more committees, so far as the sitting time of the house is concerned. I am in favour of going back to the hours we had at the last of last session, and keeping with them until we finish.

Mr. Brown (Essex West): Would you be willing to reduce the time of the speeches to thirty minutes?

Mr. Graydon: I would be willing to reduce everybody else's except the one I am making now.

In so far as the United Kingdom parliament is concerned, there is another point I want to raise. As has been very properly pointed out, debates there are naturally concentrated. It is a remarkable example of how they concentrate in close quarters around the subject at issue. Those of you who have witnessed those debates can corroborate me. Debates in the

[Mr. Graydon.]

British house have a relation to the subject that few debates could have in this chamber. Our set-up in this chamber does not make for discussion of that kind. I suppose when we get the loudspeakers on our desks—

Mr. MacDougall: God forbid.

Mr. Graydon: The hon. member may have Victoria day on Monday by then, and he will not have to work. In any event, one of the troubles with this chamber is this; and in what I am now saying I am not suggesting it should be changed. On the other hand, we have got to consider the fact that this chamber is more like a cathedral than it is like a debating chamber. With a man away down at one end debating with the hon. member who just interrupted from down at the other end, how can you expect a profitable debate from the standpoint of those two members? It is not possible to have that sort of debate in this chamber, but it is possible in the United Kingdom chamber in which no member has a seat allocated to him. The result is that you see the cabinet, the secretaries, the under-secretaries and so on all huddled up, close together. I remember seeing the late Hon. Ellen Wilkinson—who was a very small woman anyway, and who was a member of the Attlee cabinet—when she was sitting in the house. There were two big cabinet ministers sitting on each side of her and she was squeezed in between them into about four or five inches of space. It is the economy of space, of course, which makes the House of Commons at Westminster the great debating chamber that it is.

We must take things as we find them. You cannot perhaps change the complexion of this chamber or the geographical position of its seats; and perhaps the best thing we can do is to have a loudspeaker system so that we can at least hear what everyone says. But even with that system, in a chamber built as this one is, I do not think you will find that closeness and proximity in debate between members which is characteristic of Westminster.

I should now like to come to one other matter among those that have been raised. Having in mind the extension of the work of the House of Commons and of the government, how best can we fit our rules and our procedure in to take care of it? I know it is the old story about the question of the estimates and the like. I think we ought to do one of two things with some of the estimates. The estimates of the Department of External Affairs are now sent to the standing committee. Those who sit on that committee—I do not know whether other hon. members in the house have the same