

has taken a step in the right direction, and I think it would be a still better step if we were to confine ourselves to day sittings, such as he has indicated in the very exhaustive research my hon. friend has made into the practice of other countries. From the information given us by my hon. friend, it appears that in all civilized countries, except England, they have but one sitting a day, and except also probably in the dependencies of England which are governed by British customs. But in England the conditions are totally different. It would be very difficult there to have the meetings of the House, as in other countries, from two or half-past one until six. The members of the House of Commons in England are in general men of leisure, their habits are different from ours, and it is more convenient for them to meet at three o'clock and sit in the evening. But there they have endeavoured to limit the night sittings to the twelve o'clock rule except towards the end of the session. I have seen many members here whose health has been seriously affected by these late sittings, to which most of us are unaccustomed, because most of us are busy men as well outside of parliament—professional men or men who have other business that requires their attention—which renders it doubly difficult for us to withstand the fatigue of evening sessions. We made a very beneficial change last year. And my experience of our sittings on Wednesdays is that we get through a great deal of business and that the change from the evening sitting has been a very satisfactory one.

My hon. friend has stated that the House is a 'word factory,' and that idea has been expressed by other speakers. My own belief is that, if we had strictly business sittings from two to six or half past six, the discursive style, the style of long speeches which exists in this House, I think, more than in any other House I have any knowledge of, would be greatly curtailed. I am not in favour of that rule which prevails in the United States of limiting the time of the speaker, or allowing the handing in of a written speech for incorporation in the record of the debates. I do not think that is consonant with the spirit of our institutions. As my hon. friend is well aware, it would be impossible, in the House of Commons in England, to take up the time which some speeches take up in this House; because, by common consent in that chamber, the aggression would not be endured. I am sure that all who have any knowledge of the working of the House of Commons of England will agree with me in that. I believe that even Mr. Gladstone himself, when he proposed the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, occupied only a little more than an hour, and then he apologized for taking up so much time. I believe they got through more business in half an hour than we get through in a week here.

I merely rose because we were invited by the Prime Minister to state our opinions. I regard this as a most important subject, and I think my hon. friend (Mr. Wright) has brought it before us in a very forcible manner. And I would go further. I think we should try the day sittings. We should have plenty to do in the evening, and I believe the work of the session would be greatly facilitated.

Mr. GEORGE TAYLOR (Leeds). With the exception of the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), I am the senior member of this House now present. There are only three other members of the House who are my seniors—the Minister of Customs (Mr. Paterson), the former Minister of Railways and member for South Lanark (Mr. Haggart), and the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule). Having put in twenty-five years in this House, I have come to the conclusion that we ought to make a change, and I would suggest that the change should be made in this way: let the House meet at ten o'clock in the morning and sit until one, then meet again at two and sit until six, and then adjourn. Our committees could meet at eight o'clock. This would relieve the cabinet ministers, as they could have from eight to ten to do their council work and prepare their business for next day, very few of them being members of committees. The majority of members would be relieved from attendance on committees for most of the evenings of the week, only one or two committees meet in one day. Our committees now usually have only two hours for their business, meeting at eleven and adjourning at one, and they would have as long time in the evening and be able to adjourn at ten. The ministers would benefit by not being compelled to sit in this House until twelve or one o'clock at night. And I believe the House would do more work and do it with less strain upon the health of members.

Mr. A. A. WRIGHT. If it is the wish of the Prime Minister that the resolution should be withdrawn, I shall certainly withdraw it. If I have failed I have certainly failed in a splendid cause.

Motion withdrawn.

ANGLO-JAPANESE CONVENTION.

Mr. F. D. MONK (Jacques Cartier) moved:

For a copy of all correspondence between the government of Canada and the imperial authorities, and a copy of all correspondence between the government of Canada, and any person or persons, and of all reports communicated to the government in respect to the Anglo-Japanese convention regarding Canada.

He said: The object of this motion is to bring to the attention of the House and to