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PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL

Question Hour in the English House of Commons

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This is a history and critical analysis of question hour in the English House of Commons with some comparative material on questions and interpellations in the Chamber of Deputies of the Third Republic (France) and the German Reichstag (before Hitler).

The first two chapters are introductory--they deal with the functions of a legislative body and the importance of parliamentary control as a major function. Chapters III through VII constitute a history of English question hour from its origin early in the eighteenth century through World War II. In Chapters VIII and IX there is an analysis of those rules of procedure of the House of Commons governing questions and adjournment motions--including some selected rulings of the Speaker of the House of Commons. Chapter X is a classification and analysis of extensive materials contained in the appendix--covering questions and adjournment motions in the English House of Commons and, for a more limited period, interpellations and questions in the French Chamber of Deputies and the German Reichstag. The relationship of the English civil servant to question hour is explored in Chapter XI--the material in this chapter is a summary of personal interviews in London in 1933 and 1934. Chapter XII contains a brief survey of legislative control in the United States. The final chapter is an evaluation of English question hour.

CONCLUSIONS

In the English House of Commons the written-answer question is frequently used and is of considerable importance for dealing with local and personal matters. It served a similar purpose in the Chamber of Deputies of the Third Republic but was little used in the German Reichstag from 1919 to 1933. The decision as to what matters are suitable for written answer remains in the hands of the individual Member of Parliament. Written answer is also provided for oral-answer questions which cannot be reached during the period allotted for questions.

Question hour itself makes a major contribution to the practice of responsible parliamentary government. If Parliament is to provide criticism where criticism is due and is to serve as a medium for informing the public, question hour is vital. By contrast to this important role of the question for oral answer in England, it was little used in the Chamber of Deputies of the Third Republic and was absent from the practice of the German Reichstag after 1919.

In England the adjournment motion ("for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance") has almost disappeared as a device for instituting a debate. The interpellation (it may be considered roughly equivalent to the motion to adjourn as it is used in the English House of Commons for commencing debate) was an essential ingredient in French parliamentary government from 1871 to 1940 but never became important in the German Reichstag. In the House of Commons limited opportunity still remains to raise matters for debate on the adjournment for vacations. Brief discussions take place on the adjournment at night, although this opportunity

does not arise at times of heavy pressure on the House of Commons. It is of significance that matters raised at question hour may be developed further on the various forms of adjournment motions which are used for opening debate.

Question hour itself has for many years been the chief instrument by which Parliament has kept Government and civil service in line with the public interest as it has found representation in the House of Commons. This is the genius of question hour. One may see in the press conference in the United States an institution which serves a similar purpose. It is through question hour that information becomes available about the far-flung operations of modern English government.

PREFACE

This study is concerned with the development of question hour in the English House of Commons during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Brief consideration is given to the eighteenth century roots of the institution, to questions and interpellations in the German Reichstag and French Chamber of Deputies, and to the significance of parliamentary control for the United States.

The author cheerfully accepts full responsibility for the shortcomings of this work, but takes this opportunity to acknowledge the numerous contributions which have been made to the finished product. The late Professor Joseph Ralston Hayden of the University of Michigan gave unstintingly of his time to supervise the work which went into this book and provided the encouragement and stimulation so essential to bring it to completion. Professors James Kerr Pollock and Everett Somerville Brown of the same University assisted materially in the preparation of the manuscript. The author's wife, his colleagues at Western State College of Colorado, and his colleagues at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College contributed advice and encouragement. The Research Foundation of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College gave financial assistance to the project, which was sponsored by the Social Science Research Council of the same institution. The staff of the Foundation worked overtime to complete the manuscript. Western State College of Colorado provided stenographic assistance in the final revision of the manuscript.

The research for the original thesis was conducted in Ann Arbor and in London, Paris, and Berlin. It was completed in June, 1934 under the title, Questions and Interpellations in the First Chambers of Germany, France, and England. Further research was carried out in 1940 and 1946. Harlow J. Heneman, Joseph E. Kallenbach, S. Morley Scott, and William B. Wilcox made suggestions which have been carried out in the revisions of the original manuscript. Mrs. M. B. Fox of Ames, Iowa graciously permitted the author to consult her notes on question hour. Her study of questions in 1860 is included in the appendix. Norman Currin, Dwight C. Long, and William C. Lucas, all former students of the late Professor Hayden at the University of Michigan, contributed material which is included in the study. The author takes this opportunity to thank the many friends who have contributed to the completion of this study.

In England many friendly hands have contributed to the work. The late J. W. C. Beesley, former clerk in the House of Commons Library, provided daily help and suggestions during the author's stay in London. By letter he contributed the statistics on questions and adjournment motions from 1934 to 1940. Sir Henry Noel Bunbury, from 1920 to 1937 Comptroller and Accountant General to the Post Office, helped the author while he was in London by valuable suggestions about the nature of question hour. He has also read the manuscript. John Vivian Kitto, Assistant librarian of the House of Commons Library from 1908 to 1937 and Librarian from 1937 until his retirement in 1946, was helpful during the years the study was in preparation. E. G. C. Weatherley of the research division of the House of Commons Library furnished data on questions and adjournment motions from 1940 to 1946 and also furnished the data on the number of days on which the House of Commons sat from

1914 to 1945-46. Dr. Arundell James Kennedy Esdaile, Secretary of the British Museum from 1926 to 1940, assisted the author in his research in London. Others who gave help and advice to the author while he was in England include H. G. Corner, in 1933-34 associated with the Institute of Public Administration in London; the late A. R. Jarvis Firmin, in 1933-34 clerk in the House of Commons Library; Dr. Herman Finer, Lecturer and Reader in Public Administration at the London School of Economics and Political Science of the University of London, currently visiting Lecturer at Harvard University; Harold J. Laski, since 1926 Professor of Political Science in the University of London; Hugh Dalton, since 1919 Lecturer in the London School of Economics and Political Science and from 1929 to 1931 Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and for a brief period after 1945, Chancellor of the Exchequer; William A. Robson, since 1926 University Reader in Administrative Law at the London School of Economics and Political Science of the University of London; William George Stewart Adams, from 1933 to 1945 Warden of All Souls College at Oxford University; Edwin Deller, in 1934 Principal of the University of London; the late Arthur Percival Newton, former Professor of History in the University of London; Arthur Sydney Hutchinson, in 1933-34 Principal Private Secretary to the Home Secretary, now Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Home Affairs; W. A. Ross, in 1934 Assistant Secretary to the Minister of Health; Miss Margaret Bondfield, Minister of Labour from 1929 to 1931; the late Hastings Bertrand Lees-Smith, formerly Lecturer at the London School of Economics and Political Science of the University of London, and from 1929 to 1931 Postmaster-General; Sir J. Alan N. Barlow in 1933-34 Chief Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, later Under-Secretary to the Treasury, now joint Second Secretary to the Treasury;

the late Sir Edward T. Campbell, for many years Parliamentary Private Secretary to Sir Kingsley Wood; Sydney Herbert Wood, in 1934 Director of Special Enquiries for the Board of Education and from 1939 to 1945 Principal Assistant Secretary to the Board of Education; Mr. Merson, in 1934 associated with the Office of Customs and Excises; the late Lord Tweedsmuir; Captain Rochfort, in 1934 Principal of the Bill of Entry Section of the Statistical Office of H. M. Customs and Excises. The American University Union in Paris and London was genuinely helpful as was the Amerika Institut in Berlin. In Paris the author profited by the aid of André Siegfried, and Jean Marchand and the rest of the staff of the Chamber of Deputies Library. In Berlin both Dr. Louis P. Lochner of the Associated Press and Dr. Eugen Fischer, in 1934 Direktor-General of the Reichstag Library, helped the author.

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CHAPTER I
FUNCTIONS OF PARLIAMENT IN A DEMOCRACY

One hears frequent criticism of Congress in the United States, nor have the British spared the "Mother of Parliaments." Implicit in the criticism is the fundamental assumption that the representative system of government is worthy of preservation. We profess to believe in democracy, but we may be unaware of the foundations upon which it is built. During the Second World War, Harold J. Laski put into print the tenets of his conception of "democracy as a procedure." From the vantage point of wartime England he thought that its fundamentals were (1) "maintenance of free speech and free association," (2) effective public opinion, (3) preservation of the House of Commons as a "living reality in the national life," (4) preservation of trade unions to determine "the conditions under which workers live," (5) approachability of bureaucracy, (6) welfare of the mass of the population.¹ The importance of the representative element of government he explicitly recognized in his third point. For us democracy would be deprived of its historic meaning were there no representative body to guide and control the governmental institutions of the nation.

The role that the representative body should play in the political organization of a modern democratic state is imperfectly understood in

the United States. Because the English government and organization of today are better adjusted to the realities of representative government based on universal suffrage and political parties, the role of a parliament is better understood. We are familiar with the practice of the Congress in Washington, D.C., hence we think of representative government in terms of the role of Congress in our national life. For us, therefore, representative democracy involves a bicameral legislative body chosen by popular election, a chief executive chosen by virtual popular election and independent of the legislative body, and a court system independent of external domination with both political and judicial functions. To us these seem fundamental to good democratic government. This doctrine of "separation of powers" is accepted by student and judge, citizen and Congressman as the summum bonum of our constitution and way of government. An Englishman, thinking of representative democracy from a different frame of reference, would be bewildered by such a doctrine. For him this doctrine of "separation of powers" would mean a Government of those selected by political success from a bicameral parliament whose lower house, chosen by popular election, was in effect a unicameral body. He would think of the Government as being legally responsible to the lower house but in reality dominating the house politically and, as well, dominating the administrative and governmental machinery, and controlling the formulation of public policy. He would have no conception of courts that assume political functions such as declaring the acts of the parliament unconstitutional. An election every two years at a set time would seem to him out of keeping with the necessities of democratic parliamentary government. As a consequence of these two points of view we have two different conceptions of the role of the representative body and of the elected representative--the one on this side of the Atlantic, the presidential, on the other side, the cabinet system.

It is clear to the informed Englishman that lawmaking is not the only function of Parliament, and not the most important function of that body.² This is true of Congress in the United States, although it is not as obvious nor as well known.³ It was true of the parliaments of the French Republic and of the German Republic.⁴ Parliament has lost much of the legislative function through the concentration of legislative initiative and deliberation in the Cabinet and departments of government. It has left much of the detail of legislation for the departments to fill in by various kinds of orders.⁵ This trend can be observed in almost any representative form of government. It flows from the changes in Parliament brought about by universal suffrage and modern political parties, and from the growing complexity of government consequent on the complexity of modern society.⁶ The parliament of a representative democracy votes laws, taxes, and appropriations, but its effectiveness is measured by many things other than the laws it passes and the budgets it approves. It is the medium through which problems of public policy are interpreted to the citizen, it expresses the will of the nation (its representative function), it keeps the Government in touch with public opinion and at the same time furnishes leadership and guidance in the formation of public opinion, and most important of all, it controls the executive and administrative machinery.⁷

The private member of Parliament in England soon learns that he has little opportunity for participation in lawmaking. He lacks the time, the inclination, the capacity. He seems less important than he did a generation ago or a century ago. He may think that Parliament controls public finance, but he soon discovers that there is no effective

machinery for actual financial control available to the private member.⁸ He discovers that his bills and motions have little opportunity for discussion and almost no chance of being adopted on their merits. The time of Parliament is monopolized by the Government. The backbencher may lament that he has been reduced to "a mere unit in the division-list, with no effective sphere of independent action of his own,"⁹ but under modern conditions, the private member of a legislative body cannot expect to influence public policy. His function is "ventilation of grievance; the extraction of information; the criticism of the administrative process; what contribution he can make to debate."¹⁰ He may have opportunity to serve on investigating committees. He is expected to serve his constituents, particularly if he expects to be reelected.¹¹ In France and the United States this may leave the impression that a member can keep his seat in the national legislature by pleasing his constituents even though he may make no constructive contribution to national welfare.

The evolution of the cabinet and the political party have made the cabinet responsible for law and public finance. Parliament is primarily concerned with control. The task of a parliament is to procure information and direct constant criticism at the cabinet and public administration.¹² The cabinet governs by consent of parliament but with control by parliament.

¹ New York Times, Sunday, January 19, 1941, Section 4, p. 9.

² Lord Wedgwood, Testament to Democracy (1943), pp. 18-19, says "In short, it is Parliament as the sounding-board, not Parliament as a law factory, that makes public opinion—shapes opinion, not only for the schools and for the Press, but for the Church and for the philosopher." Harold J. Laski, "The Parliamentary and Presidential Systems," Public Administration Review 347 (Autumn, 1944), says simply, "The function of a parliamentary system is not to legislate." See also C. J. Friedrich, Constitutional Government and Politics (1937), p. 257, and W. I. Jennings, Parliament (1940), pp. 494-495.

³ Roland Young, This is Congress (1943), pp. vii-viii.

⁴ Friedrich, op. cit., p. 362.

⁵ C. T. Carr, Delegated Legislation (1921), pp. 19-22, justifies the transfer of a large proportion of legislative activity from Parliament to the Government and administrative agencies. Sir Henry Bunbury, "Proposed Changes in Parliamentary Procedure," 40 American Political Science Review 746-748 (August, 1946), reports the recent addition of an all-party standing committee to examine all such delegated legislation and report to the House of Commons thereon.

⁶ Friedrich, op. cit., pp. 389-390.

⁷ R. K. Gooch, The Government of England (1937), p. 172, outlines three functions, "making of law, the administering of public finance,

and the controlling of the executive." Émile Giraud, Le pouvoir exécutif (1938), pp. 124-125, divides the functions of parliament into three: (1) express the will of the nation and serve as source for recruitment of ministers, (2) keep the Government in touch with public opinion, (3) provide publicity, criticism, and discussion. Friedrich, op. cit., p. 345, says "the cabinet governs Great Britain today with the advice and consent of Parliament." Ibid., p. 362, he sees "parliaments and parliamentarians" as the "integrating agencies through which the plans of the central bureaucracy and the claims of the various interest groups are expounded to the larger public with a view to discovering a suitable balance." Harold J. Laski, Parliamentary Government in England (New York, 1938), pp. 116-117, states the functions of Parliament as being "To make a government...with the initiative in legislation," to provide for "ventilation of grievance," and "extraction of information" to maintain public interest and educate the public in the significance of what is being done, to exercise the "selective function" of making political careers. G. F. M. Campion, An Introduction to the Procedure of the House of Commons (1929), p. 6, thinks that Parliament has three basic powers: "(1) The power to express an opinion on executive action, (2) legislative power, (3) financial power."

⁸ Jennings, op. cit., pp. 282-337.

⁹ Laski, op. cit., p. 134.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 135.

¹¹ Jennings, op. cit., pp. 498-499.

¹² Gooch, op. cit., p. 200.

CHAPTER II
PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL

Parliamentary control is the process by which Parliament gets information and directs criticism at the Government.¹ In England the opportunities to carry out these two essential functions are open to the private member of Parliament, to the opposition parties, and especially to the official Opposition party. Among the devices available to the English Parliament to get information and to direct criticism at the Government are questions, discussions on the motion to adjourn, returns ordered by Parliament, command papers, Parliamentary committees, departmental committees and Royal Commissions set up by the Government, debate on the Address from the Throne and on Opposition motions, discussion on Government bills and motions, limited opportunity for debate on private members' motions and bills, and financial discussions in Committees of Supply, and Ways and Means.²

The discussions in Committees of Supply, and Ways and Means serve as an opportunity for the opposition parties to direct criticism at the Government or some particular department. Private members' bills provide opportunity for directing criticism, but a very limited opportunity, and only in rare cases do these bills eventuate in legislation. Private members' motions furnish infrequent opportunity to the private member

of Parliament, but these opportunities are monopolized by the Opposition party organization when the Labour Party is in opposition. Also, they are so infrequent, so poorly attended by members, and so little noticed by the press that they are not generally useful to all members. The debates on the Address from the Throne and on Opposition motions of censure or lack of confidence offer opportunity for debate on general Government policy. Although they are not effective openings for most backbenchers, they serve the interest of the official Opposition. Departmental committees and Royal Commissions provide efficient machinery for getting information, but they are controlled by the Government and they do not give the individual member a chance to participate in the process of getting the information. Parliamentary committees are infrequently used for investigation. This offers a limited opportunity for Parliament and Members of Parliament. The standing committees in the House of Commons are substitutes for the committee of the whole House. They are not specialized committees in the American sense. They are a part of the process of ratification of Government-sponsored legislation, and they can be controlled by the Government majority which is always present in each of them.³ They function at the second reading stage of legislation. Returns and command papers provide means of getting information, but they are subject to control by the Government. The discussions which take place on the motion to adjourn may be very important--at times almost the equivalent of the French interpellation--on the other hand, they may be private, petty, and unimportant. Questions are the one form of control completely at the command of the backbencher, and, at the same time, of the Opposition.

Questions have assumed their modern important position in the procedure of the House of Commons within the last century. We can distinguish three basic types, and one derivative type: (1) the starred question, which is given oral answer at question hour, (2) the unstarred question, which receives written answer along with starred questions not reached during question hour, (3) the private notice question, which is put primarily by the Leader of the Opposition about the Parliamentary business of the day. The derivative type is the supplementary question. Under the supervision of the Speaker any member may put questions which arise out of those put formally at question hour. The member putting the starred question and other members as well take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the supplementary question. The English interpellation, if one might use that phrase, is provided for by Standing Order No. 8. The provision for a full debate in the evening, under this rule, for matters which cannot be dealt with at question hour or at some other time does not carry with it, however, the implication of a Government's fall if the motion should be carried. This form has almost disappeared from the practice of the House of Commons.⁴

In the United States the Member of Congress finds opportunity to direct criticism and secure information through the standing committees and most effectively through special investigating committees such as the Dies Committee on Un-American Activities. The English practice of responsible Government is lacking in this country. The President is independent of Congress and is therefore not primarily responsible, in the political sense, to that body, although of course he is in a criminal sense. This is a major cause for the absence from our government of effective means of control by Congress over the administrative and executive establishments.

Questions in the French Chamber of Deputies are a pale imitation of the English question hour. Both before and after the procedure reforms in the Chamber in 1909 the interpellation was the major weapon of parliamentary control.⁵ In the Third Republic (1871 to 1940), the emphasis on the responsibility of the Ministry to parliament prevented the Government from being able to dominate and control the Chamber of Deputies and Senate as the English Government could control the House of Commons. The standing committees in the Chamber of Deputies, being like the American committees, contributed to the independence of the legislative body. The political instability of the groups which combined to support French Ministries contributed to the weakness of the Ministry and to the power of parliament, and of groups in parliament.

The interpellation was introduced into France in a form much like the question of the English House of Commons of the late eighteenth century.⁶ This form, introduced during the days of the French Revolution, evolved into the modern French interpellation during the July Monarchy.⁷ It disappeared along with the rest of responsible parliamentary government during the Second Empire and returned just at the end of the reign of Napoleon III.⁸ From 1871 on the National Assembly made use of the practice and it was incorporated into the rules of the Chamber of Deputies adopted June 16, 1876.⁹ The interpellation is a debate instituted by a Deputy which may be closed by an ordre du jour (Order of the Day). An unsatisfactory vote at the close of the debate on an interpellation sometimes brought about the fall of the Ministry. Thus, the

interpellation and the vote which followed it gave the Chamber of Deputies, and sometimes the Senate, a definite influence in the policies of the Ministry and a power of life and death over it. The oral question, of which after 1926 there could be four a week, was of little consequence. The written questions adopted after the procedure reforms of 1909 put into the hands of the member of the national legislature a convenient means of getting information. These questions have never been generally used as a medium of criticism. With the interpellation ready for use at all times, the written-answer question seemed impotent to a Deputy or party bent on making trouble for the Government.

The Prussian practice before 1862 followed English traditions, but used the French term interpellation.¹⁰ The amendment of the rules of the Prussian legislature in 1862 broadened the so-called interpellation in the direction of French practice. The Reichstag of the North German Confederation and of the German Reich followed the rules of procedure of the Prussian legislature. In 1912 the rules of the Reichstag provided for both questions and interpellations.¹¹ The interpellation could have no political consequences as the Chancellor and his Government were not politically responsible to the Reichstag. The questions were set up following the British practice with both oral-answer and written-answer types provided.¹² When the rules of the Reichstag were revised in 1922, questions for oral answer were eliminated, and the answers to written-answer questions were no longer to be printed.¹³ The interpellation remained the only means of direct control in the hands of the Reichstag. Its use was limited to those interpellations signed by thirty members. Questions, which received written answer,

required the signatures of fifteen members of the Reichstag. In 1929 the Government was given power to place any question on the orders of the day for oral answer.¹⁴ This restored the right of oral question and answer at the discretion of the Government. Germany was plagued with a political instability much like France, but the interpellation was not a factor in producing it.¹⁵ The strength of party groups and of party discipline turned the activities of the German Reichstag into more stereotyped and less dramatic lines than the colorful, dramatic interpellation in the French Chamber of Deputies. In Germany, control was largely exercised through party representation on standing committees, which were like the American and French committees. The private member was a cog in a party machine and was without the opportunities for getting information and directing criticism which his counterpart possessed in England or France. This was so because the machinery was not designed to make a role for the individual and also because the machinery which existed was not used. Between 1930 and 1933 the Reichstag gradually receded in importance, emerging after Hitler's Putsch as the famous "highest paid male chorus in the world." Its theme song was "Ja, Ja, Jawohl." The interpellation was one of the least of the victims of totalitarianism in Germany.

The question and interpellation have been logically and inevitably connected with the form of parliamentary government which emerged in the nineteenth century--almost as a fundamental consequence of the basic principle that the Government is responsible to parliament. The French interpellation may be an accompaniment to political instability rather

than its principal cause, but it has come to be associated inextricably with the evils of weak executive organization in government. British parliamentary democracy has survived two titanic wars. Question hour survived as a fundamental part of **that** British parliamentary democracy. "No better method has ever been devised for keeping administration up to the mark." ¹⁶ Question hour has provided and continues to provide a most efficient method through which parliamentary control may be exercised. It serves the private member and enables him to participate in the exercise of control over Government and administration. It is control in its most effective form.

¹ R. K. Gooch, The Government of England (1937), p. 200.

² Ibid., pp. 200-205; F. A. Ogg, English Government and Politics (1936), pp. 453-459. For an explanation of some of these devices see W. I. Jennings, Parliament (1940), pp. 91-109, 201-205, 294-303, and 343-358.

³ Sir Henry Bunbury, "Proposed Changes in Parliamentary Procedure," 40 American Political Science Review 743 (August, 1946), indicates that party discipline is "not so strongly enforced" as in the House of Commons itself.

⁴ Cf. infra, pp. ²⁵⁷⁻²⁵⁸ . For Standing Order No. 8 see Standing Orders of the House of Commons (1938), p. 10. This Standing Order was No. 10 from 1902 to 1933.

⁵ M. le Pressensé, Rapport Marin, 9. Legislature 1909, . Annexes, No. 2486, May 17, 1909, proposed to the procedure committee of the Chamber of Deputies that the English practice of written and oral questions be introduced. The committee recommended to the Chamber of Deputies that the written question be adopted, but continued in effect the French style of oral question and answer which amounted to an abbreviated debate and lacked the efficiency and importance of the British question hour.

⁶ A. Esmein, Éléments de droit constitutionnel Français et comparé (1927), II, 493-494; Joseph Dubuc, La question et l'interpellation (1909),

pp. 28-29; James Onimus, Questions et interpellations (1906), pp. 3-4; Eugène Pierre, Traité de droit politique électoral et parlementaire (1893), p. 693.

⁷ Pierre, op. cit., pp. 693-694.

⁸ Esmein, op. cit., II, 501.

⁹ Roger Bonnard, Les Règlements des Assemblées Législatives de la France depuis 1789 (1926), pp. 467, 473-474. The rules were Nos. 39-49 in Chapter VI.

¹⁰ Lucjan Bekerman, Die wichtigsten Mittel der parlamentarischen Kontrolle im Deutschen Reich, England und Frankreich (1910), p. 64; Julius Hatschek, Das Interpellationsrecht im Rahmen der Modernen Ministerverantwortlichkeit (1909), pp. 103-106; Lenoid Katz, Das parlamentarische Interpellationsrecht (1913), pp. 87-88.

¹¹ Geschäfts-Ordnung für den Reichstag (1914), p. 22. Questions were asked and answered before 1912, but it was only after 1912 that they were regulated by the rules of the Reichstag. See 285 Verhandlungen des Reichstags 1657 D.

¹² 290 Verhandlungen des Reichstags 309-310; 284 ibid. 1673 ff. (May 3, 1912).

¹³ 374 ibid. 4856 ff.; 357 ibid., 8966 ff. (November 14, 1922), 9082 ff. (November 23, 1922).

¹⁴ 424 ibid., 1591 A (March 29, 1929).

¹⁵ Cf. infra, p. ²⁶⁷ .

¹⁶ Harold J. Laski, Parliamentary Government in England (New York, 1938), p. 119. Lord Wedgwood, Testament to Democracy (1943), p. 55, says question hour is "the most important feature of Parliament."

CHAPTER III

ORIGIN OF ENGLISH QUESTION HOUR

Question hour is a product of the nineteenth century, but its roots lie in the "unreformed" House of Commons. In the eighteenth century the House of Commons was an aristocratic and somewhat leisurely body. As long as it was an assemblage of English gentlemen, there was no need for a question hour, for almost without formal regulation the answers were provided to questions of members, whenever seemed convenient. No one was too particular about how the questions were put or how much debate took place when the answers were given. The procedure of the House of Commons in these pre-Reform days had gone through three stages of development. From the days of Edward I until about the time of Queen Elizabeth the House of Commons was in its formative stage. The procedure of petition to the Crown for redress of grievance was replaced in the time of Henry VI by the bill as the customary mode of parliamentary activity. Between the time of Queen Elizabeth and the Revolution of 1688 the historic order of business emerged—highlighted by the successful emergence of Parliament as the dominant force in English Government. Between the Revolution of 1688 and the Reform of 1832 the governing classes sought to exploit the supremacy which Parliament had gained "for the maintenance of their own supremacy in the state."¹

Question hour had its roots in this period of the government of the classes, but it was the democratic developments of the House of Commons after 1832 which gave to question hour its modern characteristics. The changes in procedure after 1832 were in direction rather than in form. The dramatic changes in the realities of English government resulting from the rise of the political party and the emergence of the responsible Cabinet government of today were not "reflected by any marked or striking alterations of parliamentary procedure."² As Sir Courtenay Ilbert said, "Forms devised for the protection of Parliament against the King were used for the protection of the minority against abuse of the power of the majority."³ This emphasis on "protection of the minority" is according to Josef Redlich the "characteristic tendency of English procedure."⁴

The modern period in the development of the procedure of the House of Commons can be dated from the rise of the Irish Home Rule movement. Redlich summarizes the developments of this period thus:

Three tendencies stand out in bold relief; the strengthening of the disciplinary and administrative powers of the Speaker, the continuous extension of the rights of the Government over the direction of all parliamentary action in the House, and lastly, the complete suppression of the private member, both as to his legislative initiative and as to the scope of action allowed to him by the rules,...and they have all risen out of the hard necessity of political requirements [the Irish, and the increase of parliamentary business].⁵

The main problems of parliamentary procedure under existing conditions are two: on the one hand, how to find time within limited parliamentary hours for disposing of the growing mass of business which devolves on the Government; and on the other hand, how to reconcile the legitimate demands of the Government with the legitimate rights of the minority, the despatch of business with the duties of Parliament as a grand inquest of the nation at which all public questions of real importance find opportunity for adequate discussion.⁶

Tradition in the person of Sir Thomas Erskine May places the origin of the practice of asking and answering of questions in the House of Lords on February 9, 1720, O. S.⁷ It was the South Sea Bubble which provoked the exchange in the House of Lords.⁸ We would say today that Lord Cowper put the question. The incident is reported as follows:

Lord Cowper took Notice to the House of the Report of Mr. Knight's being taken in Custody, which being a Matter in which the Publick was highly concern'd, he desir'd those in the Administration to acquaint the House, whether there was any Ground for that Report? The Earl of Sunderland having upon this inform'd the House, in what manner Mr. Knight had been apprehended and secur'd; a Motion was made to address his Majesty, to order his Ministers abroad, to use the most effectual Instances to have him deliver'd up and sent over. Hereupon the Lord Cowper represented, "That the Person, who at present took

care of his Majesty's Affairs at Brussels, being a Foreigner it was therefore proper for the House, either to send a special Messenger of their own or to desire his Majesty to send a special Messenger to bring over Mr. Knight, who was so material an Evidence in the present Inquiry into the villainous Frauds of the late South-Sea Directors, and their Abettors. The Lord Townshend (Appointed Principal Secretary of State, February 8, 1720-1) said thereupon, "That either of these would imply a Distrust of his Majesty's Care in this Affair, which they had all the Reason in the World to be satisfy'd in: That upon the Application made to his Majesty, for using his Endeavours to get Mr. Knight secur'd, twelve Expresses were immediately dispatched for that Purpose to his Majesty's Ministers Abroad; and that these Orders had been executed with such Diligence by the Secretary of his Majesty's Resident at Brussels, that Mr. Knight was actually apprehended, and in safe Custody: Concluding "That it became the Wisdom of that august Assembly, to express their grateful Acknowledgements to his Majesty for his past Care, and to rely on his future Endeavours for getting Mr. Knight deliver'd up, and sent over. Accordingly the same Day an Address was presented, to which his Majesty return'd for Answer, That he would give the necessary Orders, and use his utmost Endeavours to have Mr. Knight secur'd and brought over.⁹

The House of Commons also took notice of the problem of apprehending Mr. Knight. On January 23, 1720, O. S., they presented an Address to the King requesting the "apprehending, and detaining" of Mr. Knight,

"Cashier of the South Sea Company, in order that he may be brought to Justice."¹⁰ It was reported that, "His Majesty had been pleased to

command him [Comptroller] to acquaint the House, That he would immediately give the necessary Orders and Directions, according to the Desires of the House."¹¹

The statement which Lord Molesworth made to the House of Commons on February 9, 1720, O. S., accomplished the same purpose that a question and answer would accomplish today, although it was not reported as a question.¹²

Since official contemporary accounts of debates in the House of Commons are not available for the eighteenth century, one can scarcely be certain of a date for the origin of questions in that body. The questions appear to involve a departure from the strict rules of procedure, since there is no proposal before the House on which action could be taken. The rise of questions was possible only because relaxation of the rules permitted a Member of Parliament to speak in the House of Commons without any motion or bill being under consideration. These essentials are met by the events in the House of Commons on May 27, 1778. It was reported that:

Previous to the House going into the business of the day, Sir Phillip Jennings Clerke rose to complain of the treatment he received when he attended the bar of the House of Lords, being obliged to stand, and be subjected to the pushings and other impertinencies of the doorkeepers; while the members of the other House were accomodated with seats when they thought proper to attend the House of Commons and some of them were refractory when required to withdraw

on a division, [alluding to Lord Denbigh's conduct on Friday last]. Several other members joined in the complaint, some alleging they had their watches stolen at the bar of the Upper House, etc. etc. The Speaker (Sir Fletcher Norton) said they had certainly much cause of complaint, and recommended the House to support with a becoming spirit their privileges of parliament.

A short conversation ensued about the partial shutting up the gallery of the House on Tuesday last, as a gentleman was permitted to remain there, who was not a member, during the whole debate. Mr. Burke got up, and said he believed that gentleman was Mr. Garrick a kind of privileged man, whose presence did honour to their assembly; a man from whom every member in that House must hold himself indebted on the force of oratory; and through whose interest, most of them had been able to enjoy the most rational entertainment at another house, where the access was so difficult, that without his friendly hand, they would have been deprived of it.

Lord Ongley said, though the galleries were shut, some member had thought proper to give a particular account of it in the papers (alluding to our's of yesterday -(delivered to the Post by Hon. James Luttrell; see Morning Post for May 27, 1778)-) he thought it therefore necessary that a stop should be put to it in the future, and therefore he would move the beginning of next Sessions, for a bill to be brought in to prevent the publication of the debates in such public

prints. Mr. J. Luttrell said he should warmly oppose such a bill, and whenever it was moved for the gallery to be shut against their constituents, he would as regularly move for every other standing order of the House being as rigidly enforced.¹³

Mr. Burke made a speech on April 11, 1780 when there was no question before the House. He rose to bring to the attention of the Government the case of a man who had died from ill treatment on the pillory. The Attorney General complimented Mr. Burke on his humanitarianism and promised an investigation.¹⁴ From the first publication of the Times in 1795, questions in the House of Commons were frequently reported. An early example was the question asked on March 16, 1795 by Captain Berkeley. He sought from Mr. Mainwaring, Chairman of a Committee on the petition of Innkeepers, the action taken on the petition. An answer was given to the question and a brief debate which arose was terminated by the Speaker with the reminder "that there was no question before the House." Whereupon, the House adjourned.¹⁵ The question and answer of February 6, 1795 have a modern ring. "Mr. Jekyl desired to be informed, whether the instruments expressing his Majesty's acceptance of the Sovereignty of the Kingdom of Corsica did lie upon the table." The answer provided that minimum of information which often is revealed by answers today. "Mr. Pitt said, that from his personal knowledge, he could not now answer the Hon. Member."¹⁶

By the nineteenth century questions had been accepted by the House as a regular part of its procedure, but they were still somewhat outside the rules. Events in the House of Commons on March 16, 1808 throw light on the position of the question at that time. Lord H. Petty put a ques-

tion to Mr. Foster, Chancellor of the Exchequer, on some Orders in Council in Ireland. Mr. Tierney asked a supplementary question, but when he sought to make a speech, the Speaker interrupted him.¹⁷ Toward the close of the sitting, Mr. Canning directed a question to Mr. Tierney. Mr. Tierney interrupted by observing "that there was no question before the house." Mr. Canning continued, asking Mr. Tierney if he intended to "give notice of any motion on the subject?" Mr. Tierney "avowed that it was his intention in future to prevent that species of debate which was called conversation, unless there was some specific motion before the House, or some understanding established as to the latitude which should be allowed in it." After the Chancellor of the Exchequer had intervened, Mr. Canning "observed, that a conversation of that kind became irregular as soon as it was formally taken notice of." Lord H. Petty maintained that Mr. Tierney had been deprived of an opportunity to defend himself by the rigorous operations of the rules of the House. Whereupon Mr. Charles Abbot, Speaker, "addressed the house nearly in the following terms:"

My conduct having been brought before the judgment of the house, accompanied with no indistinct charge of partiality, I trust I shall be excused for offering a few words to the house on the subject. It has ever been the usage of the house, and it has been found a most convenient usage, to permit questions to be asked, tending to facilitate the arrangement of business. An occurrence of this nature took place this day. The noble lord put a question to a right hon. gent. to which question an answer was given. A right hon. gent. then rose, whose

knowledge of the forms and customs of the house led me to presume, that he would not pass beyond the limits the occasion prescribed....The language which that right honourable gent. used called up a right hon. gent. on the opposite side, who replied to him. At that moment several hon. members rose. ...I should have felt it my duty to have put an end to the conversation; but when one of the hon. gentlemen who rose distinctly spoke of the conversation, no choice was left me on the subject. I therefore interrupted the conversation, and on proceeding to read the orders of the day, a question being open, the right hon. gent. rose in his place, and declared that which he has just stated...and it is for the house to declare whether they will in future allow the continuance of that usage which has given rise to the present occurrence.¹⁸

A resolution of confidence in the Speaker was passed on a motion by Mr. Secretary Canning, but no formal action was taken on questions or conversations. From these events we might draw the inference that questions were supposed to concern the business of the House. They were not, in fact, confined within these limits and there was a trend toward bringing more and more of the general activities of the Government within the range of questions. It should be added that questions were asked both at the beginning and the end of the sitting--just before public business, and just before adjournment.¹⁹

In the second quarter of 1825, questions first appeared under the heading "Parliament" in Palmer's Index to The Times. From that time on,

they appear regularly in the quarters during which Parliament sat. The heading in the index was general and no more than an indication that questions had now become important enough to attract the attention of the indexer. Questions were also frequent enough that the practice of giving notice had arisen. Sir Robert Wilson made this clear when he said on May 16, 1828:

Sir, it was my intention to have put a question to Ministers touching the Foreign Relations of the country; but as it is usual to give his Majesty's Ministers notice of such an intention, and as I have not an opportunity of so doing, I shall for the present postpone my intention but I beg to give notice that I shall put some questions to His Majesty's Ministers on this subject on Monday next.

That notice of questions was given privately is clear from the complaint of Sir James MacKintosh on July 4, 1828 at an interruption by the same questioner, Sir Robert Wilson, an interruption which the latter explained by saying, "I merely intimated to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that I meant to put a question to him--but I had no idea in so doing, of interrupting my Right Honourable Friend."

It was no accident that the Committees on Procedure of 1831-32, and 1834 were concerned with the procedure on petitions in the House of Commons. After 1810 there was an overwhelming increase in the number of petitions. They came by the thousands. There were 132 in 1811 compared to the 8,961 in the session of 1830-31. This forced upon Parliament the adoption of restrictions on the proceedings for the consideration of

petitions. While it is true that grievances can be dealt with by questions, and while it is also true that grievances were generally dealt with by petitions before 1834, it does not seem reasonable to assume that the question is "in effect the right of petitioning the Crown and Parliament for the redress of grievance."²⁴ Questions seem to have arisen out of an exception to the rules of the House of Commons that there must be a question before the House for a member to take the floor. It cannot be denied that the limitation of opportunities on petitions contributed to the increase in the use of question and answer after 1834. More particularly, however, question hour is a development since 1832 and one closely associated with the changes in the character and procedure of the House of Commons after the reforms of 1832.

¹ Josef Redlich, The Procedure of the House of Commons (1908), I, 5.

² Ibid., I, xvii, introduction by Sir Courtenay Ilbert.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., III, 193.

⁵ Ibid., I, 206.

⁶ Ibid., I, xxi, this second paragraph is by Sir Courtenay Ilbert, the first paragraph is by Josef Redlich, as cited.

⁷ Sir Thomas Erskine May, Law and Usage of Parliament (1924), p. 210, note 2.

⁸ "The South Sea Company was formed in 1711 by Robert Harley.... The stock of the company rose in six months from 128 1/2 to 1,000." The Bubble burst in August, 1720, bringing ruin to many. The Columbia Encyclopedia (1940), p. 1662.

⁹ Timberland, The History and Proceedings of the House of Lords from the Restoration in 1660 to the Present Time (1742-1743), III, 141-142, in the marginal note calls this a "debate on a Report of Mr. Knight's being apprehended," and reports it as occurring February 9, 1720, O. S. See also Torbuck, A Collection of the Parliamentary Debates in England

from the Year 1668 to the present TIME (1741), VIII, 16-17 (February 9, sic, 1721); 7 Parl. Hist. 709-710 (February 9, sic, 1721); 21 Lords Journals 403 (February 9, 1720, O. S.). Alpheus Todd, On Parliamentary Government in England, II, (1869), 340, says that the Earl of Sunderland, who answered Lord Cowper's question, was Prime Minister at this time.

¹⁰ 19 Commons Journals 406 (January 23, 1720, O.S.).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 419; Torbuck, op. cit., VIII, 15-16.

¹³ Morning Post (London), May 28, 1778. See also 19 Parl. Hist. 1203-1204. The italics in parentheses in this quotation are mine.

¹⁴ 21 Parl. Hist. 388-391.

¹⁵ Times (London), March 17, 1795.

¹⁶ Ibid., February 7, 1795.

¹⁷ 10 Parl. Deb. ls. 1159-1160.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1170-1172.

¹⁹ For examples see Times (London), January 28, 1809; 22 Parl. Deb. ls. 1112-1113.

²⁰ Mirror of Parliament, 1828, II, 1515.

²¹
Ibid., III, 2396.

²²
Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, V (No. 639); ibid., 1834, XI
(No. 284).

²³
Ibid., 1831-32, V (No. 639), Minutes of Evidence, p. 342.

²⁴
The Constitutional Year Book (1931), p. 178; ibid. (1938), pp.
160-161.

CHAPTER IV
QUESTIONS IN MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

In 1835 the now universal practice of giving written notice of questions first appeared. The first such notices to appear on the Notice Paper were published in the Votes of February 25, and March 25, 1835. On February 25, the following appeared:

1. Mr. Fowell Buxton—. To put a Question relative to the measures which are in progress for the education of Negroes, and also relative to the appointment of Local Magistrates in Jamaica to the office of Special Magistrates.¹

On March 25, Mr. Wilks gave notice of a question respecting "Charity Estates remaining uninvestigated by the Charity Commissioners."² The same day, Col. Evans gave notice of a question on correspondence with the Turkish Government.³ These questions were not separated on the Notice Paper and Order Paper, but appeared haphazard with "Notices of Motions." Four additional notices of questions appeared with motions in 1835.⁴ This handful of questions appearing in the official notices represents only a small proportion of the questions asked and reported by the Times, and the Mirror of Parliament. The practice which had

already grown up of giving private notice to the Minister concerned must have prevailed for the bulk of questions of which no written notice appeared. Speaker James Abercromby ruled at this time "That as a strict matter of right, any member of Parliament was entitled to bring on a motion without giving notice of it."⁵ Motions and questions at this time have two things in common: One, they both appear together in the Votes, two, a member had a strict right to put either a question or motion without formal written notice, although very rarely were motions permitted without formal notice, but it must have been quite common for questions to be put without formal notice. In the years following 1835, notices of questions can be observed with increasing frequency in the Votes, published under the heading "Notices of Motions."

A procedure committee met in 1837. Because the number of questions had not reached substantial proportions, this committee did not give consideration to this topic, nor did it consider the practice of moving the adjournment of the House in order to institute an independent debate. Because of the latitude allowed at this time in asking and answering questions, this use of the adjournment motion was not of great importance. At this time, amendments on putting the question of reading an Order of the Day were eliminated. Thus was closed this convenient channel for calling the attention of the House to matters in which members were interested.⁶ This restriction of opportunity for discussion was one factor working toward the enhancement of the value of questions to private members.

The year 1847 stands out as important in the development of question hour—more exactly, it would seem to be the beginning of question hour proper. Before this time, questions were asked both at the opening of the sitting and just prior to adjournment. There have been no questions asked at the close of the sitting since January, 1847.⁷ Questions have since then occupied approximately the same position, "at the commencement of public business," which they occupy today.

When the procedure committee met in 1848 it gave scant consideration to questions and question hour. Speaker Charles Shaw-Lefevre, in answer to the only inquiry about question hour, told the committee, "I think that great public convenience has arisen from the questions put to Ministers at the commencement of the evening, which frequently do away with the necessity of a debate."⁸ The Speaker was also questioned by the committee about motions for adjournment and for the adjournment of debate, both of which had been used as means for raising discussion and as methods of obstructive tactics. He proposed that all debate be prohibited on both types of motions, and that no division on either motion be permitted within an hour of a previous division, unless twenty-one members should stand and declare themselves with the ayes in support of the motion. He indicated that the purpose of his proposals was to eliminate the use of the adjournment motion to bring on a discussion of a topic extraneous to the subject before the House, and to remove any opportunity for using these forms for dilatory purposes. The committee was sufficiently impressed by the testimony of the Speaker that it adopted the substance of the rules proposed by him on a vote of seven

to six, with the casting of the vote of the chairman for the proposals.⁹ Later, Sir Robert Peel proposed that the Brotherton resolution be not recommended to the House unless there could be a guarantee of its "efficacy" and some protection against the abuse of the power thus given to the majority.¹⁰ The committee adopted Peel's resolution in effect reversing its earlier action. In fact, these proposed rules were never reported to the House. Instead the committee included in its report the following, frequently quoted admonition:

It is not so much on any new rules, especially restrictive rules, that Your Committee would rely for the prompt and efficient dispatch of business by The House. The increasing business calls for increased consideration on the part of Members in the exercise of their individual privileges.

Your Committee would desire to rely on the good feeling of The House, and on the forbearance of its Members, and on a general acquiescence in the enforcement by The Speaker of the established rule of The House which requires that Members should strictly confine themselves to matters immediately pertinent to the subject of debate.¹¹

Resolutions embodying the suggestion of the committee that debate be eliminated when the Speaker left the Chair on going into committee of the whole house were adopted February 5, 1849.¹² Thus was closed another opportunity for the private member.

We have seen that in 1847 question hour came to occupy a fixed place in the procedure of the House of Commons.¹³ Two years later notices of questions were assigned a fixed place on the Notice Paper, appearing with separate numbering at the beginning of "Notices of Motions." This practice continued from February 22, 1849 until 1869, when questions were given their own heading, "Notices of Questions."¹⁴ The practice of question and answer had become an accepted part of British Parliamentary Procedure by the middle of the nineteenth century. For example, questions, as well as debates, had become common on the motion for adjournment from Friday to Monday.¹⁵ A further evidence of the role of questions in mid-century is the testimony of Augustus Stafford as to their importance at the Admiralty when he said, "I always had a very great difficulty as to the questions. The Committee know that [it] is the increasing habit of the House of Commons to inquire minutely into transactions in different parts of the globe or at the Admiralty."¹⁶

The procedure committee of 1854 recommended that the adjournment of the House from Friday to Monday be made automatic—without any questions, debate, or division being permitted.¹⁷ This came after a full consideration of questions of all kinds and the discussions on the adjournment motion. The proposed restriction of the rights of the private member was withdrawn in the face of the evident opposition of the House to such a measure.¹⁸ The Speaker, Charles Shaw-Lefevre, had compiled a manual of the rules of the House. His manual was referred to the Committee by the House.¹⁹ The practice of the House of Commons on questions is indicated by rules Nos. 152-154, as follows:

152. Before the Public Business is entered upon, Questions are permitted to be put to Ministers of the Crown, relating to public affairs; and to other Members, relating to any Bill, Motion, or other public matter connected with the Business of The House, in which such Members may be concerned.

153. In putting any such Question, no argument or opinion is to be offered, nor any facts stated, except so far as may be necessary to explain such question.

154. In answering any such Question, a Member is not to debate the matter to which the same refers.²⁰

These rules were not adopted by the House of Commons, but were merely declaratory of the practice of the House of Commons in 1857 and 1869, when they were published.

The questions and discussions on the motion to adjourn from Friday to Monday were given a thorough consideration by the procedure committee in 1861. Thomas Erskine May told the committee that, to his knowledge, the first notice of a question to be raised on the motion for adjournment from Friday to Monday had been printed May 17, 1850.²¹ The committee recommended that these questions and conversations be eliminated, as had the committee of 1854, but it thought the regular question hour, just before public business, should be left unlimited.²² In supporting this view, they said:

It is necessary, however, to be watchful, and to guard against the inroad of new cause of delay (which might increase the time needed to transact business). A practice has arisen

of putting questions to Ministers on notice, when no Motion is before the House; and these questions and the answers to them, are confined within narrow limits, intended to be precautions against irregular debate. There is convenience in this course; but to prevent this license degenerating into abuse, it is most important that both the questions and answers should be as concise as possible, and not sustained by reasoning which might give rise to debate. Recourse on these occasions has been sometimes had to the expedient of moving the Adjournment of the House for the express purpose of opening debate. This proceeding is to be regarded with the greatest jealousy. It is in reality an abuse of one of the forms of the House, with the avowed intent of virtually breaking its essential rules. Your Committee have come to the conclusions that this evil has not reached the point where special interference by a new Standing Order would be expedient. They are disposed still to rely on the forbearance of Members in the use of forms which respect for ancient usage leaves unaltered; and the marked disapprobation of a large majority of the House may check the growth of so objectionable a practice.²³

Because the committee was not willing to completely eliminate the desultory discussions which had been taking place on Friday, it recommended that the adjournment from Friday to Monday be automatic, without debate, and without question put, except when Supply or Ways and Means were not open. This meant that when the Committees of Supply or Ways and Means

were not set up the desultory discussions were still possible. When these two Committees were set up, the committee recommended that one of the two should be the first Order of the Day on Fridays.²⁴ This opened the way on Fridays for desultory discussions on the motion "That the Speaker do now leave the Chair." The substance of these rules became Standing Orders on May 3, 1861.²⁵

In research on questions in the nineteenth century, as well as earlier, one is handicapped by the lack of accuracy and completeness in the records of questions and answers. Charles Ross gave evidence to a committee on proceedings in 1862 that the Times Parliamentary reporting corps, of which he was the director, depended on newspaper reports for the text of questions and answers, as there was no entry of questions in the Votes and Minutes, since questions were not technically matters of debate. This committee recognized that questions "form an important part of the actual business noticed in Parliament."²⁶

Official action to place answering of questions before the commencement of public business was taken in 1867 for Tuesday and Friday sittings at the two o'clock ("morning") sitting.²⁷ This action extended only through June of that session. Two years later the terms of the original resolution were applied to all "morning" sittings.²⁸ The effect of the rule was to make official the place of questions before the commencement of public business, and also to restrict questions to the "morning" sitting when there were both "morning" and "evening" sittings. This was, however, the same order of business which applied when the House met at its regular time of four.²⁹ Thus,

it becomes clear that the custom of the House of Commons was to have a question hour just before it took up public business. Likewise, the moving of the adjournment at question time was at this same period held by the Speaker to be reserved for occasions of urgency.³⁰ This suggests much of the modern practice with regard to these two means of control by Parliament over the Government.

Redlich gives 1869 as the year when questions were assigned a separate place on the Notice Paper and when they had a fixed portion of time before the commencement of public business.³¹ May assigns the date of 1849 as the first time there was a separate place on the Notice Paper for questions.³² What actually happened in 1869 was that notices of questions were separated from motions, and given their own separate heading of "Notices of Questions."³³ This change first appeared with the Notice Paper of April 26, 1869. Questions had already been separate in fact, with a separate numbering, although they appeared from 1849 to 1869 under the heading "Notices of Motions."

The procedure committee of 1871 gave full consideration to discussion on the motion to adjourn the House, and to the procedure on the Estimates. Questions were considered, but no recommendation was made relative to them. The committee was influenced not to take any action on questions by the testimony of Sir Thomas Erskine May, Clerk of the House of Commons, who said, "I think it would be best to keep the practice on its present footing. It answers admirably well, and the replies are generally sufficient to satisfy the Member who makes the inquiry, and frequently obviate the necessity for more extended debate at other

times."³⁴ The committee recommended a further restriction of the rights of private members by removing the opportunity for discussion which had existed when the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply. On Thursday and Friday it was recommended that discussion still be permitted on the motion that the Speaker leave the Chair, but the rest of the week the motion was not to be put and the Speaker was to leave the Chair automatically.³⁵ The committee did not propose any limitation of the discussions on the motion for adjournment.

Between 1835 and 1870 the practices which make up modern question hour were evolved. The custom of giving notice of questions to be asked originated about 1835. The procedure committee which met in 1837 did not consider questions nor adjournment motions, but it did eliminate amendments on reading Orders of the Day. The asking of questions early in the sitting, at the commencement of public business, has been customary since 1847. The procedure committee of 1848 did not propose any regulation of questions and that proposed for adjournment motions were reconsidered. The convenience of question hour, however, was briefly called to the attention of the committee. From 1849 to 1869 questions were numbered separately, but appeared on the notice paper as notices of motions. After 1869 they assumed their present form as notices of questions. The procedure committee of 1854 took more notice of questions, but there was a disposition to leave unlimited the opportunity for asking questions at the commencement of public business. The practice of asking questions and engaging in debate on the motion to adjourn from Friday to Monday which had arisen about 1850 was limited but not completely eliminated. The procedure committee of 1871 accepted the testimony of Sir Thomas Erskine May, Clerk of the House of Commons, as to the efficacy and importance of questions and consequently did not suggest any

regulation of them. The committee did recommend, as had most of its predecessors, further restriction of the opportunity of members to engage in desultory debate or discussion. All these restrictions created a pressure which enhanced the importance of question hour to the Member of Parliament.

¹Votes, 1835, pp. 24, 33; Mirror of Parliament, 1835, I, 70, 140-141.

This entry appeared at two different places—first under "Notices given Wednesday 25 February 1835," and second under "Notices of Motions for Friday 27 February 1835," that is, on the Notice Paper. Mr. Buxton's question was answered by William E. Gladstone at the end of the sitting. See also 26 Parl. Deb. 3s. 434-435; Times (London), February 28, 1835, p. 2.

²Votes, 1835, pp. 207, 216-217. This entry appeared as item No. 6 on the Notice Paper under "Notices of Motions for Friday 27 March 1835." See also Mirror of Parliament, 1835, I, 585.

³Votes, 1835, pp. 207, 216-217. This was entry No. 19 on the Notice Paper. See also Mirror of Parliament, 1835, I, 585; 27 Parl. Deb. 3s. 313-314.

⁴Votes, 1835, pp. 794, 822, 832, 1093, 1138, 1145.

⁵Times (London), March 7, 1835, p. 1. In full, the Times reported:

That as a strict matter of right, any member of Parliament was entitled to bring on a motion without giving notice of it; but it had been found to conduce to the convenience of hon. members, and indeed to the convenience of transacting public business, to give notice beforehand of the day on which any motion that was not altogether unimportant would be brought forward. Unless there were cir-

cumstances connected with this motion of such urgency that the hon. member thought that they could not admit of delay, he would suggest to him the propriety of withdrawing his present motion, and bringing it forward on another day.

We believe this to have been the substance of the Speaker's observations; but from the position of his chair, and from his speaking with his back turned to the gallery, it is a matter of extreme difficulty to catch even the substance of what he says. To give his precise words is utterly impracticable. We mention this to account for the brevity with which we are always compelled to report his observations.

⁶ Parliamentary Papers, 1837, XIII (No. 517). The committee recommended: (1) that no amendments should be permitted on the question being put that any Order of the Day be read, and (2) that no notice be permitted to be placed on the Order Book for any day beyond the fourth "Notice day" after. A resolution was adopted by the House of Commons on the motion of Lord John Russell which incorporated the first of the committee's recommendations with the additional provision that Monday, Wednesday, and Friday should be Order Days, 39 Parl. Deb. 3s. 193-200 (November 24, 1837).

⁷ Times (London), January 22, 1847, pp. 3, 4; 89 Parl. Deb. 3s. 268. This question, asked on January 21, 1847, was the last example I could find of a question asked just before adjournment at a regular sitting.

⁸ Parliamentary Papers, 1847-48, XVI (No. 644), Minutes of Evidence,

p. 11. The testimony in full:

82. Sir R. Inglis) Does it or does it not appear to you that no corresponding benefit arises to The House by the ventilation of subject in the shape of preliminary questions between private Members and Ministers, which ventilation in such shape may supersede the necessity of a separate debate, or if it do not supersede, it may shorten its duration.--(Answer by the Speaker) I think that great public convenience has arisen from the questions put to Ministers at the commencement of the evening, which frequently do away with the necessity of a debate.

⁹ Parliamentary Papers, 1847-48, XVI (No. 644), Report, p. xii.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. xiii.

¹¹ Ibid., p. viii.

¹² 104 Commons Journals 21-23.

¹³ Cf. supra, p. ³³ .

¹⁴ Sir Thomas Erskine May, Law and Usage of Parliament (1924), p. 238, note 2; Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day, 1849, pp. 75-78, 83-84, 85-94, 95. Cf. supra, p. ³¹ .

¹⁵ Robert Bourke, Parliamentary Precedents (1857), p. 13.

¹⁶ Parliamentary Papers, 1852-53, XXV, Minutes of Evidence (Dockyards Committee), p. 283, in full, it was reported:

4107. Were there any other ways in which the Board of Admiralty seemed not to be in harmony with the House of Commons?—(Stafford) I always had a very great difficulty as to the questions. The Committee know that [it] is the increasing habit of the House of Commons to inquire minutely into transactions in different parts of the globe or at the Admiralty.

¹⁷ Parliamentary Papers, 1845, VII (No. 212), Report, p. vii.

¹⁸ 133 Parl. Deb. 3s. 1178-1185. See especially ibid., 1184-1185.

¹⁹ 130 ibid. 317-318 (February 7, 1854).

²⁰ Rules, Orders, and Forms of Proceeding of the House of Commons relating to Public Business (1857), p. 38; ibid. (1869), pp. 37-38.

²¹ Parliamentary Papers, 1861, XI (No. 173), Minutes of Evidence, p. 37.

²² Ibid., Report, p. xi.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., p. xii. The reason for making this new rule effective was that adequate opportunity for discussion of almost anything could

be had on the motion for the Speaker to leave the Chair. When the House of Commons is in plenary session, the Speaker occupies the Chair and the Mace is on the Table. When the House of Commons becomes a committee of the whole house, or a committee of the whole house on Supply, or on Ways and Means, the Speaker leaves the Chair, the Mace is removed from the Table, and the Deputy Speaker, who is also Chairman of Committees, presides over the discussions in the committee of the whole.

²⁵ 162 Parl. Deb. 3s. 1510, 1519, 1521, 1522, 1528. The four resolutions made the following provisions: (1) fixed Ways and Means, or Supply Committee for Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, or for any other day appointed by the House, (2) made Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Order days and made Monday and Friday Government days (at this time, there was a short sitting on Wednesday), (3) made the adjournment from Friday to Monday automatic (i.e., no debate or division was permitted), while the Committees of Supply, and Ways and Means were open, and (4) set either Supply or Ways and Means as the first Order of the Day on Friday, and provided that, on the reading of the Order of the Day, the question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," should be put.

²⁶ Parliamentary Papers, 1862, XVI (No. 373), Minutes of Evidence, pp. 47-48. Ibid., Report, p. vi, the committee said:

Your Committee had laid before them several specimens of works which might furnish a compendious record of Parliamentary Proceedings for the use of Members; among them is one called the Parliamentary Record which was prepared last year by Mr. Charles Ross. It contains such selection of

entries in the Votes and Minutes of either House as above described, and in addition, an entry of such questions asked in either House, with a note of the answers, as do not admit of being recorded in the Votes or Minutes, inasmuch as they are technically [not] matters of debate, without any proceeding of either House being taken upon them, but which at the same time, according to modern practice, form an important part of the actual business noticed in Parliament.

²⁷ 122 Commons Journals 247-248 (May 27, 1867).

²⁸ 124 ibid. 171 (April 30, 1869); 195 Parl. Deb. 3s. 1981-1982.

The resolution was:

Resolved, That, unless the House shall otherwise order, whenever the House shall meet at Two o'clock, the House will proceed with Private Business, Petitions, Motions for unopposed Returns, and leave of absences to Members, giving of Notices of Motions, Questions to Ministers, and such Orders of the Day as shall have been appointed for the Morning Sitting.

²⁹ 195 Parl. Deb. 3s. 1977.

³⁰ 196 Parl. Deb. 3s. 19, reports as follows:

Mr. Speaker said, he could not put the Question without reminding the House that the privilege of moving the Adjournment of the House upon asking a Question had been reserved by

the common consent of the House for occasions of urgency. Unless that privilege were exercised with forbearance, the result would be fatal to the successful conduct of Public Business.

³¹ Josef Redlich, The Procedure of the House of Commons (1908), I, 117.

³² May, op. cit., p. 238, note 2.

³³ Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day, 1868-69, I, 537-546, 575-591, 595-630, 631, 641, 645. Cf. supra, p. 33.

³⁴ Parliamentary Papers, 1871, XI (No. 137), Minutes of Evidence, p. 12, contains the following report:

May testifying With regard to ordinary questions, it would be quite impossible to allow a discussion, otherwise, the whole proceedings would be brought into confusion. On Monday last there were 26 Questions in the Paper; they were all asked, and there were five or six more asked without notice supplementary questions, and the simple asking and answering these questions occupied upwards of three-quarters of an hour. If a discussion had been allowed, the whole night would have been absorbed.

(Mr. Newdegate) Would it not be possible to give the House an opportunity, if it had received notice, of precluding a question without discussion?—(May) I think it

would be best to keep the practice on its present footing. It answers admirably well, and the replies are generally sufficient to satisfy the Member who makes the inquiry, and frequently obviate the necessity for more extended debate at other times. It will be observed that whenever a Member is not satisfied with the answer he receives, or when he thinks a more extended discussion necessary, he has other opportunities of bringing the matter before the House.

Italics in brackets are mine.

35
Parliamentary Papers, 1871, XI (No. 137), Report, p. iii.

CHAPTER V

REFORM AND NEW RULES

The changes in the procedure of the House of Commons made before 1870 were designed to preserve as much as possible of the old rules and traditions, as much of private initiative as was consistent with the conduct of public business, and the fundamentals of private members' rights. In spite of this the private member had lost much. He could not initiate discussions on the petitions to the House of Commons. He had lost his opportunity for questions and discussions on the adjournment from Friday to Monday, although the Friday discussions remained in a different form for some time yet--i.e., on the Speaker leaving the Chair to go into committee. Opportunities had been cut down for discussions on the Estimates and on bills. For its bills, and for other public business, the Government had taken the larger part of the time of the House.

The growth of obstruction by Irish members made reliance on the cooperation of members of the House of Commons impossible.¹ "After 1877 the best mode of meeting obstruction became the most instant problem of parliamentary procedure."² Sir Courtenay Ilbert thought "The existence of every Government, and especially of every constitutional Government, depends...on the assumption of a general desire to make the machine work."³

The procedure committee of 1878 heard some suggestions from Speaker Brand which were the germ of the idea later incorporated into the Standing Orders as the urgency motion for the adjournment of the House. The Speaker thought the practice of moving the adjournment of the House to commence a debate was "highly inconvenient, and should be stopped if practicable." He opposed a hard and fast rule eliminating all such opportunity for discussion, therefore, he thought "that before public business came on, if a Member desired to discuss a question of urgency, he should submit it in writing to the Speaker." This would permit the Speaker to read the motion and decide "whether it was an urgent question, and was one that should be put or not."⁴ The committee did not adopt the Speaker's suggestion, but it did attempt to deal with dilatory motions along lines suggested by the Speaker. Sir Thomas Erskine May thought that there was not "any very great inconvenience arising from the present rules as to questions." He did take exception to their number and their length, but he felt that they saved the time of the House by obviating debate.⁵ No one suggested to the committee that questions should be regulated, hence the committee did not recommend any rules for questions. The pressure of questions is clearly indicated by their increase in number:

Year	No. of sittings	No. of questions	Hours occupied by questions
1857	116	451	22
1867	128	912	45
1877	122	1343	66

Sir Reginald Palgrave, who served the House of Commons as Clerk, had his doubts about the desirability of the practice in the light of the increase in the practice as revealed by his table above.⁶

When Cavendish Bentinck had called the attention of the procedure committee of 1871 to the waste of time involved in reading a question twice--once on giving notice of the question, and once on asking it--Sir Thomas Erskine May thought the practice did not require regulation as it did not take much time.⁷ In 1880 Joseph Cowen noted that it took two hours for question hour and that an hour of this time was spent in reading questions. Speaker Brand ruled that the practice was customary, and convenient, but that there was no rule requiring questions to be read.⁸ Henry W. Lucy, dean of Parliamentary correspondents of the late nineteenth century, places the origin of this practice in the previous Parliament (1874-1880). Writing at the time of Joseph Cowen's observation, he said, "In the last Parliament some members who rather fancied their literary composition, and loved the sound of their own voices, thought it would be an agreeable thing to recite the terms of their question."⁹ Lucy comments that Cowen's suggestion was a good one. "It was not too soon to speak since the habit of putting questions has increased, is increasing, and must sternly be diminished."¹⁰ He suggested also that, since Cowen's suggestion that questions not be read at the time they were asked had met with general approval, the House might "on easy compulsion feel inclined formally to discountenance this added and altogether indefeasible waste of time [i.e., reading questions at the time of giving notice of them]."¹¹ A month after Mr. Cowen's

helpful suggestion, a member [Finnigan] read a question which took a half column in Hansard. Speaker Brand ruled that it was not strictly out of order. After the question was answered, Parnell insisted that it was previously the universal custom to read notice of questions. Callan placed the blame for reading questions on the former Conservative Government, which, he said, "insisted that Questions should be read, for the purpose of occupying the time of the House, no matter how immaterial they were." The Speaker again ruled that the practice was in order, but, he said, "I am inclined to think the House will do well to depart from it."¹²

"Remarkable in many respects" was the session of 1881. The House often sat far into the night and even into the next day. It all began on Monday, January 24, 1881 when the Chief Secretary for Ireland [Mr. Forster] asked leave to introduce the Bill for the Protection of Person and Property (Ireland)--the Coercion Bill. It took twenty-two hours to carry the Prime Minister's [Gladstone] motion for precedence--from four o'clock Tuesday until two o'clock Wednesday. This was, in 1914, said to be the seventh longest sitting on record.¹³ On Monday, January 31 began "the longest and most memorable of all." It took from four o'clock Monday till half-past-nine Wednesday, forty-one hours and thirty minutes, to quell the Irish obstruction and vote leave to bring in the bill. Only heroic measures by Speaker Brand carried the day for the Government. He came into the Chamber shortly after nine o'clock on Wednesday (the Speaker and Deputy Speaker had taken turns presiding):

Silencing Mr. Biggar and speaking in measured terms, Mr. Brand said that a Bill, believed to be urgent in the interest of the State, was being resisted by an inconsiderable minority by modes of "Obstruction," which was a Parliamentary offence. The majority of the House was threatened, and must be vindicated. He was satisfied that he could best carry out the will of the House by declining to call upon any more Members to speak and by at once putting the Question.¹⁴

That afternoon [February 3, 1881] the obstructing Irish members were named and forcibly removed from the service of the House.¹⁵ After this experience with Irish obstruction, Speaker Brand was given limited dictatorial powers over the procedure of the House of Commons. Under these powers he set up the following rules governing dilatory motions:

1. That no Motion for the adjournment of the House shall be made, except by leave of the House, before the Orders of the Day or Notices of Motions have been entered upon.¹⁶
2. That when a Motion is made for the adjournment of a Debate, or of the House, during any Debate, the Debate thereupon shall be strictly confined to the matter of such Motion.
3. That, if during any Debate, a Motion be made for the adjournment of the Debate, or of the House, Mr. Speaker may decline to put the Question thereupon, if, in his judgment, such Motion is made for the purpose of obstruction; or, if he think fit to put such Question, he may put it from the Chair forthwith.¹⁷

In 1880 the House had discontinued the practice of reading questions when they were to be answered--instead, asking them by number.¹⁸ Mr. Dillwyn suggested on July 4, 1881 that members should hand their questions in at the Table instead of reading notice of them before the House. Speaker Brand agreed that "a still further saving of time might take place" if the practice were adopted.¹⁹ This is the modern practice with regard to notice of questions, since the member hands his questions in to the clerks at the Table.

The Gladstone Cabinet recognized the importance of drafting rules of procedure to control obstruction by calling a special autumn session in 1882 for the one specific purpose of revising and modernizing the rules of the House of Commons. In the six weeks following October 24, "the work of procedure reform was accomplished only after a long and bitter struggle."²⁰ Josef Jellich when he wrote his monumental work on the House of Commons early in the twentieth century, thought this first unified effort "at fundamental reform" had not, "as yet, been surpassed in importance or extent."²¹ The twelve resolutions which were adopted at this session were designed to make the majority of Commons master in its own house.²² The second of these resolutions became Standing Order No. 9--providing for urgency motions for adjournment.²³ The rule was designed to prevent the motion for adjournment at question time from being used for obstruction, but at the same time to make the

device available for introducing discussions of matters of intrinsic importance. The rule made the motion dependent upon the support of forty members, or as an alternative of ten members and the approval of the House on a division. The debate, when permitted, was to come after all questions had been disposed of.

In the elections of 1886 the Irish Home Rule Party won eighty seats in Parliament. This gave them the power to use urgency motions for adjournment, since it required only forty members to invoke this form of discussion. Reading notices of questions could also provide an effective means of killing time.²⁴ Before the procedure committee of 1886 had reported, the practice of reading notices of questions was discontinued by resolution of the House. The rule adopted at this time read:

Resolved That Notices of Questions be given by Members in writing to the Clerk at the Table, without reading them viva voce in the House, unless the consent of the Speaker to any particular Question has been previously obtained.²⁵

Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson, who introduced the resolution, thought the disadvantages of reading notices of questions were many. He said, "The object of his motion was to prevent what had really become a great waste of public time. (Cheers.)" He continued, "Not only had the practices of putting questions grown immensely, but there had arisen another practice of putting a number of supplementary questions with the object of arguing against the view drawn out by the original question." He con-

cluded that, "Questions had in fact grown to be an abuse of their proceedings." The delay of public business until five-thirty o'clock or later seemed to him justification for taking matters in their own hands and not waiting for the procedure committee.²⁶ The Chancellor of the Exchequer, representing the Government, was sure that, "Everybody must feel that the growth of questions was a serious evil." He said when he entered the House, questions took fifteen minutes, and now "they frequently took up one and a half or two hours." He blamed the press, saying, "So long as the newspapers thus encouraged the practice it would continue." He said he would be happy to support the second paragraph of the resolution as a sessional order.²⁷ With the support of the Government, the resolution embodying this paragraph was adopted by a vote of two hundred fifty-three to fifty-four.

The debate on this resolution brought out differing points of view on the institution of question hour. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach observed that the House was more crowded at question hour than at any other time. He concluded that the "House would not be willing to limit the right of addressing questions to the Government of the Day."²⁸ The Irish point of view, as expressed by Mr. Dillon, was that questions did not waste the time of the House, since they were the only possible means at the disposal of the Irish members "for bringing serious grievances to the notice of the House of Commons, and of frequently getting them redressed."²⁹ Joseph Cowen supported Dillon's point of view. He thought that it was not "the use, but the abuse of questions" that was objectionable. He saw the reason for the increase of questions in "the persistent encroachment upon the rights of private Members."³⁰ Mr. Sexton spoke eloquently for the private member, he said:

It did not surprise him to find the two front benches agreeing on such a motion. If Ministers had their way they would gladly assent to any motion for putting an end to questions altogether. (Hear). The privilege of questioning was one of the most useful in the hands of members. It was at the same time one of the most irksome in the opinion of Ministers....If hon. members rushed to a hasty conclusion on this subject they might find, when it was too late, that they had given up one of their most valuable rights. (Hear, hear.)³¹

Although there was strong objection from those who feared the precedent of regulation might ultimately end the private members' rights, the first formal regulation of questions was adopted with overwhelming support. It was the general view that the purpose of the rule was to do away with the nuisance of reading notice of questions and that "No one wished to curtail the right of members to question Ministers; otherwise Ministers would soon become despotic."³² One Member of Parliament said:

The official members of course vote "Questions" to be a prime nuisance; but the new members are jealous of this power, which affords them the only means they have, in the present congested state of public business, of influencing the national administration. The power is unduly used, no doubt, and the questions are often too prolix and diffuse. Still, we ought to keep the power, and I think we mean to do so.³³

In the report of the procedure committee of 1886 was a proposed rule for the regulation of questions. This would have added to the rule adopted by the House earlier in the session, which is referred to immediately above--the provision for questions on the business of the House, supplementary questions, and questions of immediate urgency which had been presented to the Speaker in writing without the written notice provided in the sessional rule of the House. The committee considered amending Standing Order No. 9 [urgency adjournment motion], but after full discussion, and amendment of the proposals, they were defeated by the committee.³⁴ Before any action could be taken on this report the Liberal Government fell and a Conservative Government came into power.

The closure rule was strengthened by the Conservative Government on March 18, 1887. The effectiveness of Irish obstruction in 1887, however, made further rules necessary.³⁵ The Salisbury Government had to devise the "Guillotine," the most drastic action of the House of Commons since the limited dictatorship by the Speaker in 1881.³⁶ At the next session, 1888, the Commons put through the Government's procedure reform with surprising speed.³⁷ The adjournment at a fixed hour was adopted. Standing committees were provided to save the time of the House. Dilationary motions on going into committee were eliminated.³⁸ Many less important amendments were made in the Standing Orders.³⁹ On March 7, 1888, the resolution of March 12, 1886 requiring written notice of questions to the Clerk at the Table became Standing Order No. 20.⁴⁰ At the same time the resolution of April 30, 1869 fixing the time for questions in the order of business became a Standing Order. This fixed the time for questions, where it is today, immediately following notices of motions, and preceding public business, i.e., before the Orders of the Day.⁴¹

The report of questions and answers in Hansard was not dependable before 1875. Before this time, the best source of questions and answers is to be found in newspapers, especially the Times. Before 1895 it had three boxes in the center while Hansard had only one on the side. The Times had the still further advantage of receiving the questions and answers "direct from Ministers." Until six o'clock these official copies were available for other reporters and for Hansard's reporter. After six, the ones used by the Times went off to press, and Hansard had to depend on the version, of any it may have missed, appearing in the Times the next morning.⁴² The contract with the publisher of Hansard in 1895 required that "questions to Ministers and their replies must be given in full."⁴³

The election on April 10, 1895 of William Court Gully to the office of Speaker had a profound influence on question hour. Where Speaker Peel had been liberal in allowing supplementary questions, Gully and his successor, Speaker Lowther, trimmed down this extemporaneous part of question hour. It saved time and it protected "the House from outbursts of the heat engendered by a sudden squabble," but it did reduce the spontaneity of the occasion.⁴⁴ After 1900 the subediting of questions by the clerks, under the supervision of the Speaker, came to assume its modern form. It was only logical that a question ruled out as improper should not be permitted as a supplementary question, since the Speaker was informed of questions disallowed at the Table.⁴⁵

Another practice which is an accepted part of question hour today

appeared in a limited form in the time of Gladstone, namely, the grouping of questions. This was done "in deference to his advancing years." After 1891 Mr. Balfour availed himself of the convenience. His lack of respect for question hour may have grown up out of this practice, since he missed most of the period, or the lack of interest in question hour may have simply indicated his deep-seated opposition to the whole procedure. If his wishes had prevailed, his procedure reforms in 1902 would have reduced the question hour to a minimum. Lucy indicated his disapproval of Balfour's attitude toward question hour when he said:

That would be well enough [the late appearance of the Prime Minister] in the case of any other Minister concerned only for the business of his own department. But the question hour, touching on all the subjects under the sun, is a microcosm of the Sitting. It is in its way analogous to debate on the Appropriation Bill. If one wants to know what the House of Commons is thinking about at a particular period of a Session, he should study the list of questions.⁴⁶

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the rules of the House of Commons were greatly expanded--largely to meet the challenge of the Irish members' obstructive tactics. The work of two procedure committees and of a special and regular session of Parliament testify to the importance of procedure reform. By now questions had become important enough to attract considerable attention in the procedure committees. The debates on the motion to adjourn were subjected to emergency regulation by

Speaker Brand in 1881 and were brought within the regulation of the Standing Orders by the Gladstone Government in 1882. In 1880 the House of Commons had discontinued the practice of reading questions at question time in order to save time. In 1886 it passed a resolution requiring notices of questions to be handed to the clerks instead of being read to the House. In 1888 the rules governing questions were grouped together and made part of the Standing Orders. The grouping of questions to the Prime Minister at the end of question hour began in Gladstone's time. Expanded to include a schedule of questions for all departments this practice is a part of modern question hour. By the end of the nineteenth century question hour had become the most important and interesting part of the sitting and had come to attract wide attention in the press. It had evolved into a most effective weapon for parliamentary control, and had become a firmly established institution in the House of Commons.

¹ Josef Redlich, The Procedure of the House of Commons (1908), I, 144.

² Ibid., I, 144-145. In 1877 there were only seven obstructionists in the House of Commons, but it was found expedient on July 27 to pass two rules intended to curb obstruction. July 31 Parnell kept the chamber in continuous session for twenty-one hours.

³ Ibid., I, pp. xix, xx (introduction).

⁴ Parliamentary Papers, 1878, XVIII (No. 268), Minutes of Evidence, p. 37.

⁵ Ibid., p. 9. May also expressed the opinion that the questions and answers made "it unnecessary to bring forward a motion upon the subject."

⁶ Sir Reginald Palgrave, House of Commons (1878), p. 109. Ibid., p. 40, he said:

A full admission of the utility and importance of the inquisitorial privileges of members may, however, be accompanied by some consideration for the time thus occupied... by the questions which members put upon the notice paper, a practice, in other respects most advantageous, may, perhaps, be regarded in another light.

⁷ Parliamentary Papers, 1871, XI (No. 137), Minutes of Evidence, p. 26.

⁸ 253 Parl. Deb. 3s. 1920 (July 5, 1880).

⁹Henry W. Lucy, Diary of Two Parliaments, II, 67.

¹⁰Ibid., II, 67-68.

¹¹Ibid., II, 78.

¹²225 Parl. Deb. 3s. 309-311 (August 5, 1880). The Speaker said:

It was formerly the practice for Members to read their Questions, and that practice has generally prevailed down to the present day. But I am bound to say that latterly the practice has prevailed of putting Questions at such extraordinary length that I am inclined to think the House will do well to depart from it.

¹³A. A. Taylor, Statistics Relative to the Business and Sittings of the House [1914], p. 181.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Redlich, op. cit., I, 157-162; 258 Parl. Deb. 3s. 68-88 (February 3, 1881). When the Unemployment Assistance Regulations were being considered in 1936, the House sat thirty-four hours and twenty minutes—from 2:45 P.M. Wednesday, July 22, 1936 until 1:04 A.M. Friday, July 24. Next to the sitting of 1881 referred to in the text, this 1936 was the longest on record. Three of the four members of the Independent Labour Party were suspended from membership in the House as a result of the controversy. See the Times (London), July 24, 1936, p. 14.

¹⁶Redlich, op. cit., I, 157-162. Rule No. 1 was communicated to the House on February 4, 1881. See 258 Parl. Deb. 3s. 162 (February 4, 1881).

¹⁷Parliamentary Papers, 1881, LXXIV. The Speaker (Brand) had proposed to the procedure committee of 1878 a regulation of the motion for the adjournment similar to rule No. 1. Cf. supra, pp. ⁵⁰⁻⁵¹ This became Standing Order No. 9 in 1882. It was No. 17 from 1888 to 1902, No. 10 from 1902 to 1933, and is No. 8 in the Standing Orders today. 258 Parl. Deb. 3s. 155-156 (February 4, 1881), the House of Commons granted to the Speaker authority to promulgate rules for the procedure of the House when a Minister had taken the initiative in declaring that there was a state of urgency and the House had approved by a vote of three to one ratio. The state of urgency might be ended by the Speaker or by the House by majority vote. Acting under this resolution, the Prime Minister asked that a state of emergency be declared, which it was. The Speaker was acting under this authority when he promulgated these rules. 259 ibid. 890 (March 14, 1881), the Speaker declared that the state of public business was no longer urgent and the urgency rules lapsed, but they could have been invoked again on the motion of the Government. 258 ibid. 435-438 (February 9, 1881), Speaker Brand promulgated the rules quoted.

¹⁸Cf. supra, pp. ⁵²⁻⁵³ .

¹⁹262 Parl. Deb. 3s. 1966, reported:

Mr. Dillwyn said....They had given up the practice of reading the Questions that were upon the Paper, and it had occurred to him that they might also dispense with the reading of Notices of Questions. If an hon. Member desired to

give Notice of a Question he might hand it to the Clerk at the Table. In making that suggestion he desired to ask whether the Speaker saw any objection to it?

Mr. Speaker (Brand): The House, by its action with reference to putting Questions in the House, has saved very considerable time in that process, because the House by its own action called on Members having Questions on the Paper not to read those Questions. No doubt, if the House thought proper to go still further and require that Notices of Questions should not be put at full length, but brought to the Table, a still further saving of time might take place.

See also Sir Thomas Erskine May, Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament (1883), p. 357.

²⁰Redlich, op. cit., I, 170.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., I, 170-175. No. 1 provided for closure. No. 2 limited a member to one motion for adjournment, or for adjournment of debate, during the course of a debate, and set up the urgency motion procedure for discussions on the adjournment. No. 10 gave the Speaker, or Chairman of the committee of the whole house power to put a question forthwith if he thought it an abuse of the rules of the House. Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 7 eliminated a number of opportunities for obstruction. No. 8 provided that no opposed business should come on after 12:30 at night. No. 9 increased the penal power of the Speaker for the support of the authority of the Chair. No. 11 provided that the report stage be taken without question

Put. No. 12 provided for the elimination of all discussions on going into Committee of Supply (i.e., on the question that the Speaker leave the Chair) except on the first occasion when the House took up Army, Navy, or Civil Service Votes. On December 1 four resolutions were introduced providing for standing committees of the House. One committee was set up in 1883, for that session only. Standing committees have been in regular use since 1888.

²³275 Parl. Deb. 3s. 142 (November 27, 1882). For Gladstone's comments on this rule, see 274 ibid. 48-49. This rule, together with resolutions Nos. 3 and 10 (Standing Orders Nos. 10 and 11), was a modification of the urgency rules put into effect by Speaker Brand in 1881. Cf. supra, p. ⁵⁴ For text of these Standing Orders referred to, see Standing Orders of the House of Commons (1886), pp. 10-11.

²⁴Cf. supra, pp. ⁵²⁻⁵³ .

²⁵183 Commons Journals 91, adopted as an amendment to the motion, "That Mr. Speaker do now Leave the Chair." The motion introduced by Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson had two paragraphs. The first was an expression of the congested state of business and the belief that it was not necessary to wait for the procedure committee before acting with respect to notice of questions. The second paragraph was adopted by the House after the support of the Government had been extended to this part of the motion. This put into the rules of the House for the first time, as a sessional order, the regulation suggested by Mr. Dillwyn on July 4, 1881. Cf. supra, p. 55 [▲] .

²⁶1 Times Debates (March 12, 1886); 303 Parl. Deb. 3s. 697-699.

²⁷1 Times Debates 459; 303 Parl. Deb. 3s. 700-702.

²⁸303 Parl. Deb. 3s. ~~702~~ 1 Times Debates 459.

²⁹303 Parl. Deb. 3s. 703-704.

³⁰Ibid., 704.

³¹1 Times Debates 460; 303 Parl. Deb. 3s. 705-707.

³²1 Times Debates 459-460; 303 Parl. Deb. 3s. 704-705.

³³Sir Richard Temple, Letters and Character Sketches from the House of Commons (1912), p. 35--the letter quoted here is dated March 13, 1886.

³⁴Parliamentary Papers, 1886, XI (No. 186), Proceedings. The committee action was taken on May 31, 1886, its report to the House was made June 10, 1886.

³⁵Sir Richard Temple, The House of Commons (1899), p.88.

³⁶Redlich, op. cit., I, 180-181.

³⁷Ibid., p. 182.

³⁸It was still possible to have discussions and motions on the first occasion on which Army, or Navy, or Civil Service Votes were taken up.

³⁹It was at this time that Standing Order No. 9 became No. 17. It was changed to No. 10 in 1902, and to No. 8 in 1933.

⁴⁰143 Commons Journals 85; 323 Parl. Deb. 3s. 525; 7 Times Debates 439. Cf. supra, pp. ⁵⁶⁻⁵⁸ .

41

143 Commons Journals 85; 323 Parl. Deb. 3s. 523; 7 Times Debates
438-439.

42

R. Donaldson Jordan, "The Reports of Parliamentary Debates," 11
Economica 447-448.

43

Ibid., 441.

44

Michael MacDonagh, The Parent of Parliament, (1921) I, 244; Henry
W. Lucy, A Diary of the Unionist Parliament, 1895-1900 (1901), pp. 133-134.

45

Lucy, Later Peeps at Parliament (1905), pp. 376-377.

46

Lucy, A Diary of the Unionist Parliament, 1895-1900 (1901), p. 103.

CHAPTER VI

BALFOUR REFORMS

At the turn of the century, there were some who questioned the whole idea of giving the private member the opportunities that were still open to him. Sir Henry Fowler, M. P., for example, at a banquet tendered at Wolverhampton in the Town Hall on November 10, 1901, said that the procedure of the House of Commons was in need of overhauling. He pointed to the 6,448 printed questions in the past session of the House and the nearly equal number of supplementary ones. He was critical of the House of Commons procedure. He compared it to an elephant, saying, "It could uproot a tree and pick up a pin." He thought they were working on pins, "and a very poor show those pins made."¹ The editor of the Daily News (London) was moved by the report of Fowler's speech to editorialize that "Parliamentary questions do not waste time they save it....At the outside, they last two hours, whereas a discussion upon one of them might well occupy three."²

There may have been some opposition to the thesis of Fowler's Wolverhampton speech in the press, but the leaders of both the Liberal and Conservative parties had accepted reform of procedure and of questions in particular as inevitable and desirable. The result of this general feeling of the desirability of reform of procedure was the Balfour pro-

posals of 1902. "The way had been prepared by statements made by leading men in both parties, which disclosed their conviction of the necessity for reform."³ Prime Minister Balfour "reminded the House that there was no instance in which the House had had reason to regret any of the frequent changes in rules that had been made since 1832."⁴ The Government proposed to create two separate sittings on each of the first four sitting days of the week—Monday through Thursday. The first sitting was to be from two till eight, with the interruption of business at seven-fifteen. The second sitting was to begin at nine o'clock and end at one o'clock at the latest with the interruption of business at midnight. The short sitting was to be moved from Wednesday to Friday thus giving the opportunity for the "Week-end in the country."⁵ It proposed in the second place a series of reforms intended to save time—limit on postponements to one, shortening of normal procedure on bills, and the changes in questions which will be discussed in the next paragraph. Third in the proposed reforms was the provision that the Deputy Chairman of Committees might act in the absence of the Chairman of Committees (Deputy Speaker). The final reform proposed was the strengthening of the penalties for breach of discipline.⁶ Also it was provided that the debate on the urgency motion for adjournment should take place at the second [evening] sitting at nine o'clock, instead of coming on at the end of questions. However minor this may seem, we shall see later that this proved to be a far-reaching proposal, and the beginning of the end of this form of procedure.

The Government's proposals for the reform of question hour were drastic in nature. There were to be two question periods under the Government's proposals--one after the interruption of business at seven-fifteen, and a second period after the interruption of business at midnight. Since the first sitting was to end automatically at eight o'clock, there were forty-five minutes allowed for questions at this time. Also it was proposed that time be allowed between midnight and one o'clock in the morning for questions not taken in the first forty-five minute period--except that, when the midnight rule was suspended, there would be no second question period and all questions not answered would receive written answer. The institution of the written-answer question was an important innovation. The Government proposal was that all questions not specially marked with an asterisk would receive written answer--the answer to be circulated with the Votes. This type of answer was also to be given to questions not reached during the time allowed for questions. The limitation of the time allowed for questions and the change in the time in the order of business where questions would be answered were the most far-reaching of the Government's reform of questions, since both of these changes reduced the availability and importance of question and answer. As if this were not enough, the proposal was also made to practically eliminate the supplementary question--which was in fact the most interesting part of question hour.⁷

The drastic nature of the reform of questions proposed by the Government attracted adverse criticism in the press and in Parliament. It was "feared" that a great many questions would be postponed "till midnight."⁸

The "Press Gallery" of the House of Commons met on February 3 to adopt a resolution "expressing the opinion that if Questions were deferred till midnight, it would be impossible to have them adequately reported."⁹ The right to question and to move the adjournment of the House in the case of an unsatisfactory answer was supported by Dillon in the Commons debate. He said:

It is absurd to argue that because there has been an increase of Questions, therefore there has been obstruction, and an emergency has arisen which must be met with new Rules. The increase of Questions is the natural result of the invasion and destruction of other rights which Members previously enjoyed. No case has been made out for an alteration on the ground of abuse of the right to question Ministers. I would remind the House that only a year ago when I moved the adjournment of the House in consequence of the refusal of the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to answer a supplementary Question, the Government majority fell from 146 to 40, so strong was the feeling of the House that it was injurious to the functions and dignity of this House to be denied the exercise of that right which distinguishes it, more than almost anything else, from foreign Assemblies.¹⁰

Mr. Balfour revealed his disrespect for question hour and his reason for wanting question hour to come on in the evening rather than in the middle of the afternoon. "Some...say that Questions form an interesting and critical part of our whole proceedings," he said, "and should only

be dealt with in a full House, and others...say that under our system [questions to be taken at seven-fifteen] men of business will get a chance, and will not be obliged to come down at the sitting of the House."¹¹ But he recognized the temper of the House and the opposition of the press to his original proposals. The amended form of the reform of questions which came up for approval on April 28, 1902 returned question hour to its regular place, just before the Orders of the Day and also contained no limitation of the supplementary question. But, in making these concessions, the Government provided a still more restricted period for questions than had originally been planned--the forty minutes from two-fifteen o'clock until two-fifty-five.¹² The continued opposition to the limitations on question hour even after the Government had made these two concessions aroused Balfour's ire. He thought the Government had "some right to complain of the criticism" directed at the regulation of questions. He was not yet willing to admit that his original plans had been objectionable, as he said:

It has always been recognized that Questions are capable of abuse, and have been abused now and then, and it has also been admitted that there was a great deal to be said for the original plan of the Government, which set the time for Questions between 7.15 and 8. But that hour was objected to, and a further objection was offered to the limitation of supplementary Questions. We have met the House on both of these points, and we have altered the time for Questions so as to be indeed much less convenient to

Ministers but more convenient to Members of the House, and we have done away with the limitation of supplementary Questions--a limitation which I am bound to say had a great justification. I had hoped that a concession so large as that might have reconciled hon. Members to cutting down the time for questions to a period which will allow sixty-five to be answered in addition to the Questions with reference to the business of the House....It would be an unfortunate thing if we were to allow the solid four and a half hours, which is all we get in the afternoon sittings to be entrenched upon by an overflow of irrelevant or unnecessary Questions.¹³

The Government had not stayed criticism by its concessions. There was "surprise" from T. P. O'Connor at the treatment of questions. As he said, "The great distinction, merit and superiority of the British Parliament over that of the United States was that, while here Ministers were responsible to the representatives of the people, in the United States there was an almost complete separation between the Executive and the representative Assembly." He thought questions the "symbol and sign" of constant control and supervision by the representatives of the people. The power to question, in his mind, went "to the very roots of their liberties, and yet" Balfour "thought that the House was entitled to make a change of that kind in the Constitution after a three minute speech." For these reasons he opposed any limits of "time or number... except in the common sense of the" House of Commons and the Rules of Order.¹⁴ A proposal to amend the reforms to remove the time limit on

questions was made by Fuller. "He considered that the time...might well be spared by the House of Commons." The answers to questions he thought "of vital public importance to the country." He cited the space occupied in the press as proof of his point.¹⁵

When the rules were adopted early on the morning of April 30, 1902, the Daily News (London) contained a valuable comment from its Parliamentary column:

Mr. Balfour gave way the case for his rigid time limit by admitting that during the Session questions had not averaged more than fifty a day, and that this number could very well be answered between 2.15 and 2.55. "Why, then," asked the opposition, "insert all this ramrod machinery into procedure for so small a practical gain? Why curtail a great Parliamentary right in the absence of serious abuse? Irish questions are sometimes trivial--granted. But, then, Parliament is the only safety valve for Ireland's local troubles. Moreover, questions are the most popular part of the day's Parliament, and with what force do you cut down the feature which most interests the nation?"¹⁶

In the editorial column the opinion was ventured that the forty minutes allowed for questions would limit questions to forty-five. The number of questions usually asked was said to be eighty--not counting supplementary questions. "The Government," it was said, "hopes to avoid a daily fusillade of some forty questions, affecting every Department of State." The editorial also pointed out, "At the same time, the right of moving the Adjournment of the House, which proved so precious in the

Cartwright case, is to be reduced to a shadow." It was maintained that limiting the time for debate and interposing a period of five hours between the motion and the debate on it would cause the "weapon" to lose "its edge and power" so that it "may almost as well be laid on the shelf."¹⁷ These and other critical comments did not deter the government. The rules adopted in 1902 remain substantially unchanged today. The time limit on questions is an unchallenged part of the procedure of the House, and the debate on the adjournment motion remains in the evening.¹⁸

The extensive changes in the rules made extensive changes in the content and arrangement of the Standing Orders. Former Standing Order No. 20 now became the first paragraph of Standing Order No. 9 dealing with questions. The second paragraph set the time limit on questions. The third, provided for starred questions for oral answer and a clear day's notice for all such questions. The last, provided for unstarred questions, and also for starred questions not reached during the time allowed, and specified that the answers be printed and circulated with the Votes.¹⁹ The provisions for the urgency motion provided in former Standing Order No. 17 now became No. 10 with the addition of the provision for postponing the debate until the evening sitting, although the motion was to be made at the same time as formerly--at the commencement of public business.²⁰

The new rules on questions went into effect May 5, 1902.²¹ Forty-five of the forty-six questions on the Notice Paper were starred and only

one was the new type of question for written answer. The answers to all questions, whether they were given orally in the House or were circulated with the Votes, were printed in Hansard.²² The expense involved in printing answers came up for discussion during the same session. Each answer was printed in the Votes on a separate sheet. Austen Chamberlain estimated the cost of printing at 1700£ for an average session.²³ The following December, Hayes Fisher stated that printing had cost 2300£ since May.²⁴

When the Stationery Office Vote was being discussed in 1904, Mr. Whitley suggested that the practice of printing only one question and answer on a sheet be discontinued. He thought, "It was an outrageous piece of extravagance that printing should be done in that fashion." He pointed out that "half to three-quarters of the Papers circulated consisted of Answers to unstarred Questions." Mr. Malcolm, and Mr. Gibson Bowles (one of the champion questioners of all time) supported Mr. Whitley's suggestion. The Secretary to the Treasury told him "that Members wished the unstarred Questions to be circulated in that form in order that they might send them to their constituents to show what important persons they were."²⁵ Mr. Whitley made it clear he did not object to having the answers printed but that "what he complained of was the bulk of the Papers, which might be reduced by eighty percent."²⁶ The Government promised to consult the authorities of the House to "see if something cannot be done to meet the clearly expressed wishes of the Committee [of Supply]."²⁷ A saving of 1800£ to 1900£ was estimated for an average session.²³

One can date the present practice of the House of Commons as far as questions and urgency adjournment motions are concerned from the reforms of 1902. The time limit for oral answers, the innovation of the writ-

ten-answer question, and the postponement of debate on the adjournment motion to evening have remained in the practice and rules of the House of Commons. Lucy thought that the new written-answer question saved half an hour of time "without damage or default accruing to the public service." He said, "The once occasionally dramatic, frequently tumultuous, question-hour has subsided into a matter-of-fact business function that rarely occupies more than twenty minutes, and is not infrequently discharged in one-half that time."²⁹ This opinion was not borne out by practice as the number of starred questions expanded rapidly until by 1905 it had reached the pre-1900 level and had passed that level in 1906.³⁰ Question hour has continued to be the most interesting and vital part of the activities of the House of Commons in spite of the stringent regulation of 1902, but the adjournment motion was dealt a fatal blow by postponement of debate on the motion until evening.

¹ London Daily News, November 11, 1901, p. 3.

² Ibid., p. 4.

³ Josef Redlich, The Procedure of the House of Commons (1908), I, 193.

⁴ Ibid., see 101 Parl. Deb. 4s., 1350. Cf. supra, p. ⁶¹ for Balfour's attitude toward question hour.

⁵ A. Lawrence Lowell, The Government of England (1926), I, 302-303, note 1.

⁶ Redlich, op. cit., I, 194-197.

⁷ Ibid., III, 258. The Government proposed that, "Only one such supplementary question may be asked in respect of any question of which notice has been given, and that only by the member by whom the notice has been given."

⁸ Standard (London), January 31, 1902, p. 7.

⁹ Ibid., February 4, 1902, p. 5.

¹⁰ 102 Parl. Deb. 4s. 681-682 (February 7, 1902).

¹¹ Standard (London), February 8, 1902, p. 2.

¹² Questions had occupied substantially the same place in the order of business, i.e., before the commencement of public business, since 1847. Balfour proposed to move them to the end of the first, afternoon, sitting. His proposal was for them to come between seven-fifteen and eight o'clock with the time between midnight and one o'clock available for overflow questions.

¹³ 107 Parl. Deb. 4s.137-138 (April 28, 1902).

¹⁴ Ibid., 138-139.

¹⁵ Ibid., 135-137.

¹⁶ London Daily News, April 30, 1902, p. 7.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁸ Lowell, op. cit., I, 307, 336, explains the advantages of having it in the evening. He thought that there was "no longer the same danger that the discussion of a private bill or of a motion to adjourn, or an interminable series of questions, will unexpectedly cut a great piece out of the hours when the House is most crowded, and the leading men are waiting to debate a great public measure." Likewise the danger to the Cabinet from the adjournment motion is reduced. The Government "escapes the risk of surprise," and has "five hours...to prepare its case, ascertain the opinion of its followers, persuade the doubtful, and rally the faithful."

¹⁹ 107 Parl. Deb. 4s. 101-102 (April 28, 1902); ibid., 286-287, 331 (April 29, 1902). Ibid., 332, the sitting of April 29 ended at six o'clock on the morning of April 30.

²⁰ 107 Parl. Deb. 4s. 331.

²¹ Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day, 1902, March 14 to June 4, pp. 1569, 1579. All of the eleven notices of questions given Friday, May 2 were starred questions. The French Chamber of Deputies adopted the question for written answer in 1909.

²² 108 Parl. Deb. 4s. 484.

²³ 109 ibid. 508.

²⁴ 116 ibid. 1477.

²⁵ 130 ibid. 884-885 (February 24, 1904).

²⁶ Ibid., 888.

²⁷ Ibid., 894-895.

²⁸ 132 ibid. 815 (March 28, 1904), question by Mr. Canning and answer by Mr. Victor Cavendish.

²⁹ Henry W. Lucy, The Balfourian Parliament, 1900-1905 (1906),
pp. 172-173.

³⁰ Cf. infra, p. ~~234~~²³⁴ .

CHAPTER VII
DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1905

Under the Liberal Government which came into power at the end of 1905 there was a reëxamination of the new procedure set up in 1902 by the Conservative Government. A procedure committee was appointed in 1906. Question hour was considered. The Speaker [Lowther] thought that the problem of starred, oral-answer, questions which did not get answers in the House because of the operation of the time limit could be met by a slight extension of the length of the question period. He supported his views with evidence he had collected as to the number of questions excluded from being put by the time limit.¹ The Speaker thought he might be able to separate purely local questions and designate written answer for them, but he was of the opinion that such a practice would give rise to "considerable dissatisfaction."² He also expressed the opinion that Government members could relieve the situation by taking the responsibility of not reading long, involved answers. He thought the House would support them in such a move.³

The practice of the House of Commons in the nineteenth century was to have questions asked in the order in which they reached the Notice Paper. During the last years of Gladstone's service as Prime Minister the practice grew up of grouping his questions at the foot of the list-- thus departing from the strict order in which questions had been put on the paper. But it was the strict time limit of 1902 which made general grouping of questions inevitable, since the limited time made it necessary to make the most efficient use possible of the forty minutes available. Now, all Government members could expect the same convenience that had previously been reserved for the Prime Minister. The practice of grouping questions by the Minister to whom they were addressed was defended by the Speaker against the criticism that it often eliminated questions to a group of Ministers day after day. The complaint was made that this was unfair. The Speaker told the 1906 committee the practice was useful because of the time it saved. Instead of the Minister having to waste an hour or more of his time, as had been necessary before 1902, he "knows exactly when he's wanted, and it must be a great saving of time to him, because he has his mauvais quart d'heure, and then he can go to his room and transact his business."⁴

Speaker Lowther indicated to the 1906 procedure committee that the practice of grouping questions had been suggested by Balfour in 1902. The questions of what order the Ministers should follow he said had "grown up gradually." First it was left to chance, and Ministers were permitted to appear first entirely on the basis of which Minister happened to be involved in the first question handed in--all his questions

being "pushed up to follow into that group." Complaints brought action from the Government placing certain groups of Ministers early and certain ones late.⁵ The Speaker expressed an unwillingness to undertake the task of fixing the order in which Ministers should appear.⁶ The rotation among Ministers of early and late appearances was begun in 1906.⁷ A different approach to the problem of a crowded question hour was a limitation of the number of questions allowed each member. Speaker Lowther was opposed to this, saying, "If I had the decision of it, I would not limit the right of asking Questions at all. I think it is a very valuable right."⁸

The procedure committee recommended an additional allotment of five minutes for questions. Since the meeting of the House was now recommended for two-forty-five instead of two o'clock, questions were to last until three-forty-five o'clock--beginning not later than three o'clock, or earlier if private business did not take the time allotted to it. Also the hour and a half allowed for dinner under the 1902 rules was eliminated, although the distinction between business set down for the afternoon and the evening was maintained. This interruption of business was set for eight-thirty. It was at this time that private business and motions under Standing Order No. 10 were to be taken. Thus, the several hours delay between the motion for adjournment and the debate on the motion which had been set up in the rules in 1902 was retained. The break for dinner was still preserved in fact by the proposal that no count out would be allowed between eight-thirty and nine-thirty o'clock. Also, the adjournment at night was to come at eleven-thirty instead of one o'clock.⁹

The debate on the revisions of the rules proposed by the procedure committee revealed a universal respect for question hour. The Prime Minis-

ter [Campbell-Bannerman] said:

He considered that one of the most important functions of a Member of Parliament was to ask Questions on subjects of public interest, and every one desired that the fullest opportunity should be given for the discharge of that important duty....Under his proposal, five minutes more would be allowed, with the addition of any time that was saved from that allotted to private business.¹⁰

William Redmond thought a five minute increase was absurd. He was in favor of at least fifty minutes or an hour for questions.¹¹ Swift MacNeill agreed with Redmond. "They were not in the House of Commons," he said, "primarily for the purpose of legislation, but in order to control the Government, and the only opportunity of exercising that control was to be found in the power of interrogation."¹² He also reminded the Prime Minister that he had signed the round-robin which had saved question hour in 1902. Sir Francis Powell spoke of the need for extending the time for questions because of the difficulty of bringing up motions. He ventured the prophecy that questions would be of increased value for the future as the private member's opportunities were cut down.¹³

The Government held the line on the five minute increase. That was all that the House of Commons voted. The interruption of business was set in the final action at eight-fifteen instead of eight-thirty as proposed by the committee. The debate on the urgency motion for adjournment under Standing Order No. 10 remained in the evening at the interruption of business at eight-fifteen o'clock. At least one member had suggested that

the motion ought to be taken the first thing, immediately after question hour.¹⁴ This suggestion was not seriously considered. The changes in 1906 were not substantial as the rules remained in effect almost as they had been set up in 1902.¹⁵

During the procedure debates in 1906 Swift MacNeill called attention to the abuse of the rule on anticipation.¹⁶ He said, "If anyone would look at the Order Paper upon the last day of the session of the last Parliament he would see at least twelve Motions, every single one of which was put down to prevent the discussion of matters of public interest." He accused the Whips of using such blocking motions on every conceivable matter which might possibly be discussed under the urgency adjournment motion. He said there was even a motion about blocking motions to prevent the discussion of this problem of procedure on an adjournment motion.¹⁷ In July, 1907 a committee on anticipatory motions made two recommendations to the House. It proposed that debate interrupted by a discussion under Standing Order No. 10 [urgency motion for adjournment] should be permitted after the interruption of business at eleven o'clock, even though it were opposed business and would normally not be taken after that time. It recommended, in the second place, a new Standing Order empowering the Speaker to take into consideration the probability of actual discussion before ruling out of order a motion under Standing Order No. 10 on grounds that it anticipated a motion of which notice had been given.¹⁸ The recommendations of the committee were not adopted by the House.

One member had thought of the possibility of a limit to the number of

questions that might be asked by any individual member of the House.¹⁹ This query put to Speaker Lowther during the procedure hearings in 1906 brought a prompt expression of opposition from him. The pressure from the strict limit on the time for answering questions was inexorable. Objection was raised on March 1, 1909 to ten questions and two supplementary questions by the same member. The query was, "Whether there is not a Standing Order limiting the number of questions which any Member may place upon the Order Paper to eight." The Speaker answered:

There is no Standing Order limiting the number to eight, but I understand the practice is that the number should be limited to eight. In this case some of the questions were carried over from a former day--last Thursday--and that is why the usual number is exceeded.²⁰

May says this limit of eight questions dates from 1909.²¹ In 1911 a question was again raised about the order or rule limiting questions. The Speaker said that it was "By the unwritten law. There is no Standing Order on the point. It has been the custom for a good many years, I think, not to accept more than eight questions from one Member for each question day."²² Between 1906, when the Speaker opposed limiting members as to number of questions, and 1909 conditions had so changed that the Speaker began to enforce, with the support of the House, but without any motion or resolution, a daily limit of eight questions for oral answer.²³

There were procedure committees in 1913 and 1914. Considerable time was given to the consideration of questions, and adjournment motions under

Standing Order No. 10. However, its recommendations did not include any changes in question hour or the urgency adjournment motion. Lord Robert Cecil testified before the committee in 1913. He thought the rule against anticipation ought to be modified, and was in favor of "greater freedom for discussing any topic once a week, so to speak."

His suggestion was that "before ruling out a motion for adjournment on the ground that it is anticipated the Speaker should consider whether there was any prospect of the anticipatory motion being discussed."²⁴

A member of the House of Commons agreed with Lord Cecil that motions for the adjournment had "been hampered by the rulings from the Chair." Because he thought the machinery for moving the adjournment of the House had broken down, this member wanted greater facilities for moving the adjournment under Standing Order No. 10.²⁵ The chairman of the procedure committee proposed to change the rules as set up in 1902 and return the debate on the urgency adjournment motion to its former place immediately following questions.²⁶

Action on the blocking motion was taken May 5, 1914, before the committee on procedure had reported.²⁷ Prime Minister Asquith moved the adoption of a resolution giving the Speaker power to consider the probability of a discussion of any matter within a reasonable time before disallowing a discussion of it as anticipating a motion of which notice had been given. This was made Standing Order No. 10 A.²⁸ This rule had been proposed in 1907 by the special committee of which Asquith was chairman.²⁹ In the preceding paragraph it was noted that Lord Cecil proposed such a rule to the procedure committee in 1913. There was some debate on Asquith's motion, but it was adopted without amendment and made a Standing Order.³⁰

When the practice of written-answer questions was instituted in 1902 answer with the Votes was provided by the rules. September 28, 1915 it was voted to publish the answers only in the Parliamentary Debates [Hansard]. It was generally agreed that to publish written answers in both places was a waste of money, since answers were available in the daily edition of the Debates. The change was accomplished by amending paragraph five of Standing Order No. 9.³¹ In 1915 another temporary change was made in questions. The adoption of three sittings a week instead of five was dictated by wartime conditions. In adjusting to this change, it was provided that notice of questions for Tuesday could be sent to the clerks at the Table before five Friday, and notices for Wednesday, before five Monday. This rule took the form of a sessional order.³²

Under the pressure of the wartime use of questions the limit of eight questions a member for each question day proved inadequate. Commander Bellairs, on February 24, 1919, suggested that the limit be reduced from eight to four. The Speaker accepted the suggestion with the understanding that the rule would be relaxed if questions were completed before three-forty-five.³³ This modification of the unwritten rules of the House was followed by another modification on February 19, 1920, at which time the limit was set at three. On this occasion Commander Bellairs suggested the limit be dropped to two. One member [Sir B. Falle] suggested a weekly limit of ten in place of the daily limit. The Speaker opposed the weekly limit as too complicated. There were cries of "Two a day," and "No." The Speaker suggested compromise at three questions

a day. "The House indicated agreement."³⁴ The next day, Captain Redmond objected to the curtailment of members' rights. The Speaker, supported by another member [Devlin], said, "There is no doubt, whatever, what the views of the House were."³⁵ This limitation seemed necessary to the officers of the House. It was desired to get more nearly through questions asked at question hour. Hence the activities of a few members, bent on self-advertisement, were restricted in the interests of the House. This unwritten rule restricting each member to three oral questions for a question day has been enforced since 1920.³⁶

The time for the debate under Standing Order No. 10 was fixed at eight-fifteen by the rules adopted in 1906. This time for the interruption of business remained in effect until 1927. When the hour for the interruption of business was changed to seven-thirty, this naturally brought the debate on urgency adjournment motions to seven-thirty instead of the previous hour of eight-fifteen.³⁷

An exhaustive study of procedure was made by the 1931 procedure committee, but the committee made no recommendations to the House. Witnesses before the committee had a number of ideas about questions and urgency adjournment motions. Sir Horace Dawkins, Clerk of the House of Commons, favored a limit of two questions in place of the daily limit of three questions a member then in force. As a substitute, he suggested giving the Speaker power to transfer a question from the starred to the unstarred list--thus removing it from question hour. He recommended that the procedure committee or a sub-committee examine the rules for the

admissibility of questions, as enforced by the Speaker and clerks, to determine the reasons which led to the original ruling, and to decide if these reasons still existed.³⁹ Prime Minister MacDonald proposed to the committee that supplementary questions be put only by the original questioner.⁴⁰ Thomas Kennedy [Chief Government Whip] suggested to the committee the elimination of private members' bills and motions-- thus leaving the adjournment motion as the only means of raising a matter without the support of the Government.⁴¹ Also, he wanted only one question a day from each member and supported MacDonald's desire to restrict supplementary questions to the original questioner.⁴² A similar limitation of questions at two a day with no supplementaries except by the original questioner was suggested by Sir Archibald Sinclair.⁴³ Lord Eustace Percy and Earl Winterton wanted a form of brief debate on a series of topics to replace question hour. This would have given a procedure like the conversations of the late eighteenth century, and more like the French interpellation. Winterton thought the adjournment motion might serve the purpose by making the rules for adjournment at night more lenient. Both men thought supplementary questions were inadequate substitutes for the kind of brief debates they had recommended.⁴⁴ Speaker FitzRoy, Stanley Baldwin, and David Lloyd George thought there was no need for change in the rules on questions and urgency adjournment motions.⁴⁵

A procedure committee was set up in 1932 to complete the investigations of the 1931 committee. A recommendation of this committee was that a third kind of question be created. This type of question was to be marked by a dagger, which was to indicate "the Question not of general

interest with regard to which a particular Member desires rapid information." There was to be an obligation on the Minister "to reply to such Questions as expeditiously as though they were starred."⁴⁶ The complaints about the time taken in processing answers to unstarred questions prompted this suggestion. The Speaker thought the suggestion would be "confusing to the House." Therefore, the Government did not adopt the suggestion. It was stated semi-officially that it was the practice of Ministers to reply as "expeditiously as possible to questions for which a written answer is required," and it was pointed out that often detailed information could be supplied only after a "slight delay."⁴⁷ The 1932 committee also proposed that when there was opportunity for a member to raise a matter on the adjournment at night--adjournment is automatic at eleven-thirty under the rule--he would be guaranteed a full half-hour for his statement and the Government's reply.⁴⁸ "The Government" did "not consider that the proposal to allow a full half-hour's discussion whenever a member has the opportunity of raising a question on the adjournment previous to half-past 11 o'clock is practicable."⁴⁹ Since the proposals of the committee did not get the support of the Government the only fruit of their labors was a technical revision of the Standing Orders with a view to bringing them in accord with the practice of the House.⁵⁰ There was disappointment in some quarters that a more "thoroughgoing reform of procedure" had not been carried out.⁵¹ One of the most interesting observations of the 1932 committee was its reference to the cleavage among the ranks of those proposing reforms in House of Commons procedure. One group proposed reforms with the idea in mind of Parliament as a great national forum "where great issues were debated," and the other,

with the idea of Parliament as a "legislative machine" whose duty it was to exercise control over expenditure and departmental action.⁵²

Flowing from the suggestions of the 1932 procedure committee was the revision of the Standing Orders in 1933. The only purpose of the revision was to bring them up to date in wording and arrangement. Stanley Baldwin claimed for the revision the accomplishment of condensing 104 Standing Orders into the 93 Standing Orders which comprised the 1933 rules.⁵³ There were no substantive changes in the rules, but naturally the numbering was altered by the revision and condensation. Standing Order No. 7 [formerly No. 9] was amended in the first paragraph by replacing "the Speaker" in the fourth line with the words "Mr. Speaker." The fifth paragraph, eighth line of this Order was amended by the insertion after the word "has" of the phrase, "before questions are disposed of." This addition made it clear that request for the postponement of a question must be made during question hour, otherwise the answer would be published with written-answer questions in Hansard.⁵⁴ The change in number from No. 9 to No. 7 resulted from the combination of Nos. 2 and 3 and the elimination of No. 5. This meant that No. 10 now became No. 8 [urgency motion for adjournment], and No. 10 A became No. 9 [anticipatory motions].⁵⁵

There were a few changes in the Standing Orders in November, 1934, but none in Nos. 7, 8, or 9. The power of the Chairman of a standing committee to select amendments for discussion was provided, the scope of discussions on the Estimates was widened, and the method of choosing

the chairmen of Committees was changed. Winston Churchill objected to the increase in the power of the Chairman of the standing committees as still further whittling down the rights of private members, but the House adopted the change by a vote of 178 to 24.⁵⁶ It should be added that the Churchill Coalition Government suggested some changes in the organization and functions of standing committees. These suggestions were referred, in the new Parliament elected in July, 1945, to a committee of the House of Commons.⁵⁷ Also, one should not overlook the recent addition of another method of control in the hands of Parliament-- an all party standing committee, "with instructions to examine all" delegated legislation "and to report to the House thereon."⁵⁸

Because of the importance of question hour, it has been given thorough consideration by recent procedure committees. However, the only important changes in either questions or discussions on the motion to adjourn have not come as the result of committee recommendations or formal changes in the rules. The grouping of questions to save the time of members of the Government has been a usage which has gradually evolved without any formal rule being adopted. The strict time limit adopted in 1902 and in force ever since has been the real cause for this development. The limitation of the number of questions for oral answer to be asked by any member at one sitting has likewise come about by general acquiescence of the House in support of the Speaker. Many of the recent changes in the rules of the House of Commons have been changes in form rather than in substance. Question hour remains substantially unchanged from its form in 1902 after the Balfour reforms. The discussions on the adjournment motions are substantially the same as they were after

the 1902 reforms. The device has been allowed to disappear not by formal action of the House of Commons but by disuse partly brought on by the attitude of the Speaker in disallowing discussions as not being urgent nor of public importance.

¹Parliamentary Papers, 1906, VIII (No. 89), Minutes of Evidence, questions 1 ff., appendix 2.

²Ibid., question 54.

³Ibid., question 58.

⁴Ibid., question 5.

⁵Ibid., question 71.

⁶Ibid., question 32. Mr. Blake had favored letting Ministers make suggestions, but leaving the final determination to the Speaker.

⁷Ibid., question 33. Sir James Woodhouse suggested an automatic prearranged schedule to enable the House to know what Minister was to be first each question day. The Speaker indicated that this suggestion had already been made by the Prime Minister and put into effect.

⁸Ibid., question 18. The limitation of questions allowed to each member was suggested by Mr. McCrae.

⁹Ibid., Report, p. v.

¹⁰155 Parl. Deb. 4s. 220-221 (April 2, 1906).

¹¹Ibid., 222.

¹² Ibid., 395-396 (April 3, 1906). MacNeill continued:

It was most important for both Parties that this power should remain uncurtailed....The right hon. Gentleman had given a certain five minutes and a possible twenty minutes. Could he not give them the clear hour? He thought the right hon. Gentleman would gain in the end. Very often legislation resulted from suggestions made by private Members at Question time, and as to questions of administration it was now their only opportunity of criticism. He said these things for the benefit of the Opposition, because his own position was one of benevolent neutrality...and as the power to move the adjournment had been done away with for all practical purposes, it was absolutely essential in order to maintain the rights of minorities that the power of interrogating Ministers should be maintained and even strengthened....It was curious how the opinions of right hon. Gentlemen changed when they crossed the floor of the House, and it was remarkable to remember that the Prime Minister was one of those by whose exertions, through the signing of a Round Robin, Questions were not destroyed altogether.

¹³ Ibid., 398.

¹⁴ 152 Parl. Deb. 4s. 1179 (February 28, 1906).

¹⁵ 155 ibid. 392-393, 403-404; 161 Commons Journals 114-115 (April 3, 1906).

¹⁶ See W. I. Jennings, Parliament (1940), pp. 108-109. The old rule of the House of Commons that no discussion could anticipate a matter of which notice had been given made it possible for a member to prevent discussion of any matter by submitting a notice of motion on the subject. If such motions were submitted for the purpose of preventing discussion, they were called blocking motions.

¹⁷ 152 Parl. Deb. 4s. 1178-1179 (February 28, 1906).

¹⁸ Parliamentary Papers, 1907, VII (No. 264), Report.

¹⁹ Cf. supra pp. ⁸⁵⁻⁸⁶ .

²⁰ 1 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1107-1108, Fenwick objected to ten questions put by Claude Hay. He said, "I wish to have a ruling in order to protect hon. Members who have questions on the Paper which may not be ultimately reached."

²¹ Sir Thomas Erskine May, Law and Usage of Parliament (1924), p. 239, note 3.

²² 22 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1394 (March 9), question raised by William Redmond, who asked, "Under what particular order or rule is the number of questions limited?"

²³ Jennings, op. cit., p. 92 says the restriction is by resolution, but the author has not been able to find any formal action by the House.

²⁴ Parliamentary Papers, 1914, VII (No. 378), Minutes of Evidence, questions 907-909.

²⁵ Ibid., questions 119-120.

²⁶ Ibid., Report, p. ix.

²⁷ See Jennings, op. cit., pp. 108-109, for explanation of blocking motions.

²⁸ House of Commons, Manual of Procedure in the Public Business (1924), p. 271 (10 A); Standing Orders of the House of Commons (1938), p. 11 (9). It became Standing Order 9 with the revision of the rules in 1933.

²⁹ Cf. supra, p. ⁸⁸ .

³⁰ 62 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 149-159.

³¹ 170 Commons Journals 246-247; 74 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 804-805.

³² 170 Commons Journals 96-97 (April 20, 1915); readopted 171 ibid. 11 (February 22, 1916), 172 ibid. 11 (February 12, 1917), 173 ibid. 6 (February 13, 1918), 174 ibid. 24 (February 12, 1919, to expire March 31, 1919). The text of the sessional order follows with parts added to original on February 22, 1916 in italics:

Whenever the House adjourns from Thursday to the following Monday or Tuesday, Members desiring to give Notice

of Questions for oral answer on a Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday may send Notices of such Questions to the Clerks at the Table, and any Notices of Questions so received by them before five of the clock on a Friday or a Monday shall be accepted as Notices of Questions for oral answer on the following Monday and Tuesday, or Wednesday respectively, and be printed and circulated with the Votes. Question hour was extended by fifteen minutes to four o'clock on October 25, 1916, but this applied only for the remainder of the session and has not been tried again. See May, op. cit., p. 243; 171 Commons Journals 218.

³³112 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1382-1383, Commander Bellairs stated his case thus:

May I call your attention to the state of the Order Paper? A large number of the questions have not been reached. Four Members are responsible for thirty-three starred questions, and each one of the four Members asked a number of supplementary questions. On several days there have been over 200 questions, and I wish respectfully to ask, may we have a further limit imposed, so that the number of questions allowed to each Member is reduced from eight to four?

³⁴ 125 ibid. 1050-1051. No formal resolution was adopted. See, however, contra, Jennings, op. cit., p. 92.

³⁵ 125 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1225-1229 (February 20, 1920).

³⁶ See contra, Jennings, op. cit., p. 92.

³⁷ 182 Commons Journals 390-391; 212 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 525 (December 21, 1927).

³⁸ Parliamentary Papers, 1930-31, VIII (No. 161) Report, p. iii, reports the cost of publication as 500 ~~£~~.

³⁹ Ibid., Minutes of Evidence, p. 443 (appendix No. 6).

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 18 (questions 159, 162).

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 76 (questions 606, 820-824).

⁴² Ibid., pp. 64-65 (question 605).

⁴³ Ibid., p. 115 (questions 1250-1251).

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 189-190, 333-346, (questions 2022-2029, 3400, 3532).

Under the rules it is possible, if time is available, to raise a matter on the motion to adjourn. This motion can be made after the interruption of business at eleven o'clock, but it does not permit any discussion after eleven-thirty, since at that time the House adjourns automatically

without question put. If proceedings which can be taken up after the interruption of business take up most of the half hour before final adjournment, the time for a member to raise a matter on the adjournment and for the Government to answer is cut short. If the member makes a long speech, there is no time for a Government reply.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 37, 422, 92 (questions 305, 4307-4310, and 1011-1012).

⁴⁶ Parliamentary Papers, 1931-32, V (No. 129), Report, p. xv.

⁴⁷ Times (London), July 24, 1934, p. 16.

⁴⁸ Parliamentary Papers, 1931-32, V (No. 129), Report, p. xvii.

This proposal was intended to assure that when the motion for adjournment was made, after eleven o'clock, for the purpose of a brief debate there would be ample time for a full development by the member making the motion and for the Government's answer. This would have required a flexible adjournment time, precisely thirty minutes after the motion to adjourn was made—i.e., some time between eleven-thirty and midnight.

⁴⁹ Times (London), July 24, 1934, p. 16.

⁵⁰ Parliamentary Papers, 1931-32, V (No. 129), Report, p. xvi.

⁵¹ Times (London), July 28, 1934, p. 13; July 31, 1934, p. 10.

⁵² Parliamentary Papers, 1931-32, V (No. 129), Report, pp. vii-viii.

⁵³281 Parl. Deb 5s., Commons 870.

⁵⁴Ibid., 863-864 (November 14, 1933).

⁵⁵Ibid. Compare House of Commons, Manual of Procedure (1924), pp. 268-271 with Standing Orders of the House of Commons (1938), pp. 9-11. Cf. infra, pp. 230-232.

⁵⁶Times (London), November 15, 1934, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁷See Sir Henry Bunbury, "Proposed Changes in British Parliamentary Procedure," 40 American Political Science Review 742 (August, 1946).

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 747-748.

CHAPTER VIII

"EXTERNAL" RULES AND CUSTOMS

The rules and customs by which questions and adjournment motions in the House of Commons are governed have been classified by Sir Horace Dawkins (former Clerk of the House of Commons) as "internal" and "external."¹ The former concern what is permissible in questions and adjournment motions; the latter set their place in the timetable, differentiate types of questions, and provide the procedures of asking questions and moving the adjournment of the House. Both types are founded on Standing Orders, but there are innumerable matters with which the formal rules do not deal. The basic rules for questions and the English interpellation (urgency motion for adjournment) are found in Standing Orders Nos. 7-9 and 21-25.² It must be remembered that there is no possibility of political consequences in England on the adjournment motion comparable to those flowing from the ordre du jour voted at the close of the interpellation in France.³

Standing Order No. 7 provides that questions shall be asked and answered the first four sitting days each week. Oral answers are infrequently given on Friday, but the Minister has no "obligation" to answer such questions.⁴ The notice of questions must be given to the

clerks at the Table or sent to them with a signature or covering letter.⁵ Questions marked with an asterisk are intended for oral answer. Those not marked in this fashion receive written answer. It is customary for the member to receive the typed copy of the answer to his unstarred questions. Also, these answers are printed in Hansard along with the answers to starred questions which are not answered at question hour. Questions may be excluded from answer at question hour by the absence of the member, the absence of the Minister, and by the time limit. There is a provision for answering questions of absent members by proxy, but this procedure does not come into play until all the questions of members present have been asked and answered.⁶ The answering of questions for members absent when their questions were called is referred to as the second round. The Ministers are not obligated to be present for the second round.⁷ The second round is omitted before a recess, before an adjournment for Whitsuntide, and at question hour when the House meets at eleven o'clock in the morning.⁸ The right to ask questions by proxy can be exercised only by a member having a specific authorization to ask a specific question on a specific day.⁹

It is not usual to permit answers to questions if the member is not there to ask the question. Viscount Curzon, in 1924, called the attention of the Speaker to serious charges contained in a question about the use of the police in a labor disturbance in a sugar factory at Silverton. The Speaker recognized that it was not desirable for a member "to put down a serious question of this kind, and not be there to ask it." However,

at first, he saw no way to have it answered. Curzon asked for an exception to permit an answer. Major Colfax asked to have the answer given. Later on in the sitting he decided to allow the question to be put and answered in spite of the member's absence.¹⁰

Question hour ends at the regular sitting at three-forty-five. After that time only questions not answered because of the absence of a Minister may be answered. It is the usual procedure to ask private-notice questions after the questions on the Paper have been completed. These include urgent questions, those of public importance, and those concerning the business of the House. The last type is put by the Leader of the Opposition, and answered by the Leader of the House of Commons.¹¹ Private-notice questions not of an urgent character may be put only during the regular question hour. Answers to questions on the Notice Paper take precedence over private-notice questions.¹² Sometimes exceptions are made by postponing the answer to a regular question until after question hour, or by asking a private-notice question during the answering of questions on the Paper.¹³ Another exception is that private-notice questions by the Leader of the Opposition may take priority over regular starred questions by backbenchers.¹⁴ It is possible with the approval of the Speaker and the general support of the House of Commons that an original question may be put without any kind of notice, published or private, but this is unusual.¹⁵ The Speaker in 1936 ruled out a question by Winston Churchill to the Prime Minister (Stanley Baldwin) because the Leader of the Government knew nothing of it and because he felt the members of the House were opposed to having the question put.¹⁶ Some feeling about the matter must have developed, and also there was

evidence of uncertainty about the requirements for a question put by private notice. The Speaker, four days later, promulgated some explicit rules governing questions put by private notice. These provided:

Members who desire to put Private Notice Questions must give sufficient notice, both to the Minister to whom the Question is to be addressed and to myself, of the Question which they wish to ask. Before giving my consent there are the following points which I have to consider:

First, whether the Question is sufficiently urgent to justify it being put by Private Notice as opposed to it being handed in at the Table to be put on the Paper in the ordinary way. The question of urgency does not apply if the Questions on the Paper do not take up the full hour allotted to Questions.

Secondly, whether the Question complies with the rules which govern Questions which are put upon the Paper.

Thirdly, that there are not already on the Paper Questions dealing with the same subjects.

No question arises as to whether the Question meets with the approval of the majority of the House. Whether the Question is allowed is entirely a matter for the Speaker to decide.

There are occasions when some unusual incident arises in the House, and it is obvious to the Speaker that the general feeling of the House is that in that particular instance the usual procedure should be waived. Unless some Standing Order would be violated, the Speaker is reluctant to stand in the

way of the general wish of the House. My reference to the feeling of the House on Thursday last may have given rise to this misunderstanding to which the hon. Member refers.¹⁷

This has nothing to do with putting of Private Notice Questions.¹⁸

We have seen that the House of Commons has an unwritten law limiting each member to three starred questions per question day.¹⁹ An answer to a fourth question may not be given even if the member forgoes asking the first three questions in his name.²⁰ Answers to questions past the limit, however, do receive written answer just as do answers to questions excluded by the time limit.²¹ These answers appear in Hansard along with unstarred questions and answers. On one occasion the Speaker permitted an answer to a question to be printed in Hansard even though the Minister had privately provided the answer to the member who had asked it. This action, however, was a reversal of the snap judgment of the Speaker not to permit its publication, and it came only after a protest at a denial of publicity for an answer to a question which had appeared on the Paper.²²

The supplementary question is a characteristic feature of English question hour. These questions are asked to clarify, expand, or refute an answer to an original question. The refutation must be ingenious as debate is not permitted. It is this part of question hour which tries the patience and ability of Ministers, and of civil servants. This is the vent for the parliamentary skill of private members. The

supplementary question is a long honored custom of the House of Commons-- one which did not fall before the reforming spirit of the Balfour rules in 1902, or the utilitarian reforms of 1882. Stanley Baldwin felt that the member who asked the question had priority in supplementaries. As he said, "He has the right to wring the last drop out of the orange before anyone else comes in."²³ However, the rulings of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker do not support this view, and control of supplementaries lies with the Speaker.²⁴

When supplementary questions get out of hand, question hour resembles an informal debate, but the rule enforced by the Speaker is that debate is prohibited.²⁵ There is no written rule limiting supplementary questions, although all the rules which apply to the admissibility of original questions also apply to supplementaries. The Speaker is the judge of the propriety of supplementaries just as he is of the original questions. The Minister, as well, has considerable control over supplementary questions, since he may refuse to answer without notice. MacDonald and Kennedy (Prime Minister and Chief Whip of the Labour Government) proposed to the Procedure Committee in 1931 that the right to put supplementary questions should be limited to the member putting the original question on the Paper.²⁶ Other witnesses demurred. Stanley Baldwin preferred to leave the House "during that hour to enjoy the perfect freedom it enjoys now, either to put supplementary questions or not, as they think fit."²⁷ Sir Horace Dawkins (formerly Clerk of the House of Commons) favored the prevailing system of no rigid restriction on supplementaries with control entirely in the hands of the Speaker.²⁸ Speaker Whitley, in 1927, favored no restrictions other than the restraint of the member, the refusal of answer by the Minister, and, in case of abuse, the inter-

vention of the Speaker.²⁹ Supplementaries on any particular question come to an end if a member gives notice of his intention to raise the matter on a future occasion--i.e., in Committee of Supply, on the adjournment at night or before a recess, or on the urgency adjournment motion (Standing Order No. 8).³⁰

The Minister is obligated to answer a question, if it lies within his responsibility to Parliament--and sometimes even if it does not. When he makes the plea that an answer would not be in the public interest, the House cannot go beyond his plea.³¹ He does not have a like obligation to answer supplementary questions.³² However, the formula of protecting the public interest would not be permitted by the House as a device for avoiding answers which might be personally or politically embarrassing to the Minister. It is common practice for a member to withdraw a question which he has put down if he has been convinced that it would be undesirable for the question to be put. He may submit a draft question to a department, and not even give notice of the question if he discovers it would be contrary to the public interest to do so. Such was the expectation of Duncan Sandys when he submitted a draft question to the War Secretary about the air defenses of London in 1938. He stated that he did not expect to put the draft question which he had submitted to the War Office.³³

Questions are addressed to Ministers. No public notice is given of questions to the Speaker since these concern the procedure and rules of the House of Commons and do not involve Government policy or administration.³⁴ Private notice of such questions is given to the Speaker. Since they involve points of order, they are not strictly questions

within the meaning of the Standing Orders. Questions may be addressed to unofficial members only if they "relate to a bill, motion, or other matter connected with the business of the house" in which such private member is concerned.³⁵ Before the middle of the nineteenth century questions were in fact addressed to private members.³⁶ The practice has become stricter since then. Questions to Royal Commissions, and trustees of the British Museum about their official duties are no longer permitted.³⁷ Formerly questions were addressed to members of the Metropolitan Board of Works, but today they are not permitted to members of the London County Council.³⁸ Gladstone, when he was Leader of the Opposition, replied to a question about his intentions should he become Prime Minister. Although he expressed doubt about the propriety of such questions to private members, he did state his intentions with regard to the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland.³⁹ Questions to private members are disallowed now—even when the private member happens to be Leader of the Opposition or an ex-Minister.⁴⁰

When the new rules came into effect in 1902 with the provision for a strict time limit on questions, the practice of grouping a Minister's answers was inaugurated at the suggestion of Balfour. In 1906 the haphazard order of appearance of Ministers which resulted from taking Ministers in the order in which their first question appeared on the Notice Paper was modified by substituting a schedule which rotated the honor of appearing first and the convenience of being last.⁴¹ The present more complicated system of precedence and rotation is available to members in the "No" lobby at either end of the Chamber.⁴² There are

changes in the system of precedence and rotation as the occasion may require. In the late twenties the pressure became so great that a special "rota" was added to the current precedence list for Tuesday. Four departments were rotated in first place on Tuesday.⁴³ Soon a fifth department was added to the Tuesday "rota" thus making first place available to each of five departments once in five weeks.⁴⁴ The increased pressure on question hour in the late thirties brought the suggestion that the "rota" principle be applied to Thursdays as well as Tuesdays. The Prime Minister indicated that conversations were taking place about both Wednesday and Thursday "through the usual channels."⁴⁵ The result of these negotiations was the adoption of the "rota" principle for Wednesday and Thursday.⁴⁶ When a member complained about the complexity of the new arrangements, Prime Minister Chamberlain reminded the House that the changes had been made for the convenience of members. Also he said he had read the new order of questions and he could understand it.⁴⁷ The tension preceding World War II brought further complaints that certain departments were not reached.⁴⁸ Later the same year the Prime Minister (Chamberlain) indicated that changes to take care of the unusual conditions resulting from the war (including the problem of what to do with questions to departments which came early on Mondays, in the absence of Monday sittings) were being arranged through the usual channels.⁴⁹ The new order was promised for circulation on October 31, 1939.⁵⁰ At the same time he made this announcement, the Prime Minister asked members to put down unstarred questions for definite days to expedite answers from departments, and he promised to provide the answers on the day they were put down for if at all possible.

Members direct their questions to the Minister from whom they wish an answer. The Prime Minister is the target of many questions because of the prestige of having the head of the Government answer one's questions. It is not necessary, however, that the answer be given by the Minister to whom it was directed. The clerks under the authority of the Speaker regularly transfer questions from one Minister, who is not responsible, to another Minister, who is. This is accomplished by notifying the Speaker, and if there is time, he will notify the member concerned.⁵¹

The motion to adjourn was a convenience to private members in the House of Commons since under it almost any subject could be discussed without violating the precedents of the House. It was in order to move it or its companion motion--to adjourn debate--on almost any occasion. It had developed into a convenient means of extending a question and answer into a debate, since a member could set himself right, if his remarks extended beyond the limits of question hour, by moving the adjournment of the House. By the rules of the House as enforced since 1882 the adjournment motion is available as a means of opening a general discussion only under rigid restrictions.⁵² It still is possible to have a general discussion on a motion for an adjournment before a recess, likewise a brief general discussion can take place on the motion to adjourn between eleven and eleven-thirty. The use of the motion before public business has commenced, which was formerly permitted, is now not possible. The procedure for starting a general debate by the urgency motion procedure is a pale imitation of the motion for adjournment arising out of question hour known before the rules of 1882 and

1902. Now the member must submit the matter he wishes discussed under the urgency motion to the Speaker in writing. The Speaker may refuse to permit the motion if he thinks it does not come within the Standing Orders--particularly if it is not a "matter of urgent public importance."⁵³ If the Speaker approves, the member rises at the commencement of public business and asks permission to move the adjournment of the House "for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance." The Speaker inquires if the member has the leave of the House. If the House does not grant unanimous leave, the Speaker calls on the supporters of the motion to rise. If there are forty supporters the leave is granted and the motion may be made at seven-thirty o'clock. Leave may also be granted by majority on division if less than forty but more than ten support the motion.⁵⁴ Under the rule of interruption of business the debate started at seven-thirty o'clock ends automatically without question put at eleven. As we shall see later, the motion is today rarely put and it is even more rare to have a division on the motion to adjourn.⁵⁵ Private business set down for seven-thirty is postponed until after the urgency adjournment motion is disposed of. This custom became a part of the Standing Orders in 1933.⁵⁶ Debate under the urgency motion for adjournment is governed by the ordinary rules of debate strictly applied.⁵⁷ The discussion must be strictly relevant to the subject on which leave to move the adjournment was granted. Nothing may be introduced in the debate which would be out of order if submitted as a part of the terms upon which the leave was granted.

¹ Parliamentary Papers, 1930-31, VIII (No. 161), Minutes of Evidence, pp. 443-444 (appendix No. 6).

² Cf. infra, pp. ²³⁰⁻²³² ■ .

³ In the French Chamber of Deputies under the Third Republic there was no question hour. The Deputy who put an oral-answer question (question orale) was allowed fifteen minutes. The Minister replied. Five minutes rebuttal was permitted. There were no supplementaries and no one else could speak. Only four of these were allowed in a week. (They remind one of the discussion at night on the adjournment in the House of Commons.) Written-answer questions (questions écrites) were in constant use after they were introduced in 1909. Notice of questions and of interpellations was given to the President of the Chamber, who notified the Government or the Minister concerned. Answers to questions were required in three weeks (twenty days) unless the Minister entered the plea that it was not in the public interest to answer. A brief debate was possible on the question of setting the date for the debate on an interpellation. The debate on the interpellation itself was closed by a resolution called an ordre du jour, which often reflected on the policy of a Minister or of the Government.

In the pre-Nazi Reichstag there was no question hour and oral answers to questions only in the rare event that the Government put a written-answer question on the agenda. In France both questions and interpellations could be put by individual Deputies, but in Germany

questions (kleine Anfragen) required the support of fifteen members, and interpellations, of thirty members. Similar support was necessary to propose that an interpellation be postponed or referred to a committee, or to propose to close the debate on an interpellation with a resolution expressing the opinion of the Reichstag on the subject of the interpellation.

⁴ 225 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 2332. There were eighty-six questions asked on Friday in the 1929-30 session of the House of Commons, but most of them were asked on a Friday immediately preceding an adjournment for a brief vacation. Most of those not falling on this special Friday were concerned with the business of the House.

⁵ 249 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 36 (March 2, 1931), the Speaker said:

It has been brought to my notice that cases have occurred in which notices of Questions have been sent by hand or transmitted through the post to the Clerks at the Table without the signature of the member appearing on them or without a covering letter accompanying them signed by the Member by whom the Question is to be put. This practice is, of course, quite irregular. Notices of Questions must either be handed in at the Table by the Members themselves who wish to ask them, or, if sent by post, or otherwise delivered at the Table, must be signed by the Member who desires to have them put upon the Order Paper.

⁶ Sir Thomas Erskine May, Law and Usage of Parliament (1924), p. 244.
See also 167 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 217.

⁷ 198 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 2638; 227 ibid. 879.

⁸ 162 ibid. 720; 164 ibid. 677; 207 ibid. 545; 182 ibid. 2428;
376 ibid. 2730.

⁹ 184 ibid. 695.

¹⁰ 172 ibid. 1360-1361; 232 ibid. 698-699, the Speaker ruled that it was in order for a Minister to make a statement on a matter of public interest after 3:45 P.M. even though it dealt with the same subject as a question on the Notice Paper which had not been reached.

¹¹ 195 ibid. 977, the Speaker ruled it was the function of the Leader of the Opposition to ask questions concerning the business of the House.

¹² 329 ibid. 1040-1041, the Speaker said, "A Private Notice Question never has any priority....If there is a question on the Paper a Member cannot put a Private Notice Question on the same point."

¹³ 227 ibid. 2310; 248 ibid. 593.

¹⁴ 254 ibid. 35-36; 248 ibid. 593-594; 236 ibid. 252-253.

¹⁵ 230 ibid. 629; 233 ibid. 1873; 235 ibid. 2422; 237 ibid. 413; 241 ibid. 1284. See esp. 234 ibid. 582-584. By leave of the House when the Speaker was not notified of a private-notice question it was permitted, see 232 ibid. 1795-1796. 175 Parl. Deb. 3s. 2029-2035 (June 20, 1864), a

question by Disraeli opened a brief debate on relations of Denmark and Germany. He said, "I do not think that these are Questions which it is at all necessary to place on the paper. I consider that I am perfectly justified, in the present state of affairs, in putting these Questions to Her Majesty's Government without a formal notice." There is not this much freedom at question hour today.

¹⁶
Times (London), February 21, 1936, p. 7.

¹⁷
Garro-Jones had raised the question of the requirements for putting a private-notice question.

¹⁸
309 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 42-44 (February 24, 1936). The authority of the Speaker over private-notice questions is based on paragraph (1.) of Standing Order No. 7, which says:

Notices of questions shall be given by members in writing to the clerk at the table without reading them vivâ voce in the House, unless the consent of Mr. Speaker to any particular question has been previously obtained.

It is the "consent" of the Speaker which makes private-notice questions possible.

¹⁹
Cf. supra, pp. 88-89, 91-92

²⁰
256 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1821.

²¹
172 ibid. 1835.

²² 325 ibid. 1531-1532, 1535-1536. Mr. Paling had asked about the Spanish Non-Intervention Committee. This question was asked on Friday, which is unusual in itself.

²³ Parliamentary Papers, 1930-31, VIII (No. 161), Minutes of Evidence, p. 37 (question 312). See also W. I. Jennings, Parliament (1940), p. 97.

²⁴ 253 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 29; 348 ibid. 594.

²⁵ Josef Redlich, The Procedure of the House of Commons (1908), II, 243-244; III, 31; 250 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 205, 343, 1184; 249 ibid. 393; 251 ibid. 1425.

²⁶ Parliamentary Papers, 1930-31, VIII (No. 161), Minutes of Evidence, pp. 18, 61 (questions 159, 605).

²⁷ Ibid., p. 27 (question 305).

²⁸ Ibid., p. 402 (question 4100).

²⁹ 203 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 388 (March 2, 1927).

³⁰ 318 ibid. 2139; 330 ibid. 551-554; 334 ibid. 1087-1090; 343 ibid. 1119-1121 (1936 to 1939).

³¹ Redlich, op. cit., III, 31-32; Mirror of Parliament, 1831, II, 1262; 234 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1866, the Speaker said, "Under the Rules of Procedure that govern questions, if a Minister says that it is not in the public interest to answer a question, he need not do so,

and a Member has no right to press him." See also 163 ibid. 1178.

³² 188 ibid. 2024-2025. See also 222 ibid. 882; 244 ibid. 1006; 254 ibid. 1701.

³³ Parliamentary Papers, 1937-38, VII (No. 173), First Report of the Select Committee on The Official Secrets Act, 1938, pp. v, xiv.

³⁴ May, op. cit., p. 240; Redlich, op. cit., II, 241; 271 Parl. Deb. 3s. 1623; Decisions of the Chair (1933), p. 105.

³⁵ May, op. cit., p. 241, note 4; 174 Parl. Deb. 3s. 1914; 141 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 194-195.

³⁶ 63 Parl. Deb. 3s. 491 (May 13, 1842); Mirror of Parliament, 1830, II, 1427-1428.

³⁷ May, op. cit., p. 241, note 4; 88 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 35-36; 95 ibid. 1322-1326.

³⁸ May, op. cit., p. 241, note 4; 334 Parl. Deb. 3s., 712-713 (March 25, 1889); 209 ibid. 1953-1954 (March 14, 1872).

³⁹ 192 ibid. 657 (May 21, 1838), he said, "My own opinion is that it would not be consistent with Parliamentary decorum for any Member of this House to state what course he would take in a future Parliament, and I am absolutely precluded from so doing"

⁴⁰ May, op. cit., p. 241, notes 5-6; 253 Parl. Deb. 3s. 973-974 (June 28, 1880); 173 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 43.

⁴¹ Cf. supra, pp. 85-86 .

⁴² G.F.M. Campion, An Introduction to the Procedure of the House of Commons (1929), pp. 125-126. Cf. infra, p. ²³³ , for the list in force in 1930, including the Tuesday "rota."

⁴³ 229 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1079-1080 (July 11, 1929); 230 ibid. 441-442 (July 17, 1929).

⁴⁴ 245 ibid. 1097 (November 25, 1930); 231 ibid. 2059 (November 13, 1929). The fifth department was Mines. Cf. infra, pp. ²³³ .

⁴⁵ 342 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 30 (November 28, 1938), question asked of the Prime Minister by Mr. McEntee.

⁴⁶ 342 ibid. 608 (December 1, 1938), it was announced that on Wednesdays first place in answering questions would be assigned to the Foreign Office, second place to the Air Ministry, and third place would be occupied in rotation by the Admiralty, Colonial Office, and Ministry of Transport. On Thursdays the Ministry of Labour was to come first, and the second place was to rotate among Home Office, Lord Privy Seal, Board of Education, and Ministry of Health.

⁴⁷ 343 ibid. 1366-1367 (February 13, 1939), question asked by Garro-Jones.

⁴⁸ 350 ibid. 2166-2167 (August 1, 1939).

⁴⁹ 352 ibid. 1193-1194 (October 24, 1939).

⁵⁰ Ibid., 1574-1576 (October 26, 1939).

⁵¹ 160 ibid., 2177; 251 ibid. 1158-1163, Mr. Thorne asked about excessive number of questions put to the Prime Minister and the Speaker replied:

That is what I have been endeavouring to carry out for some time past. Hon. Members try various devices to have a shot at the Prime Minister, when they should really put their questions to someone else. I will certainly continue to do what I can in the direction indicated by the Hon. Member.

⁵² Cf. supra, pp. ⁵⁵⁻⁵⁶ .

⁵³ Cf. infra, p. ²³¹ , Standing Order No. 8.

⁵⁴ Campion, op. cit., p. 132.

⁵⁵ Cf. infra, pp. ¹⁶¹⁻¹⁶² .

⁵⁶ ~~281~~ Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 864; Campion, op. cit., p. 140.

⁵⁷ Campion, op. cit., p. 134; May, op. cit., p. 248.

CHAPTER IX

"INTERNAL" RULES

An eminent authority has described the "internal" rules affecting questions as follows:

The rules of order governing the contents of Questions are based on a series of Speakers' rulings which have been collected since the year 1860. There are nearly two hundred of these rulings. Of these, about one hundred and forty are prior to the year 1907, and they cover almost the whole field. Since that date the new rulings that have been made, have almost all been directed to defining more precisely matters which are outside the responsibility of Ministers, such as the internal affairs of the Dominions and matters transferred to Indian provincial Governments.

These rules have grown up piecemeal and have never been reviewed by Parliament as a whole. Each ruling given by a Speaker has been treated as a precedent, and from such precedent or group of precedents a general rule has been extracted. These rules are stated in "May's Parliamentary Practice," 13th edition pages 240 to 243. They may also be found, classified for convenience of reference under three main headings, on pages 127 to 130 of "An Introduction to the Procedure of the House of Commons," by G. F. M. Champion.¹

The Standing Orders do not define what may or may not be asked of a Minister. The Speaker's rulings which form the basis for determining this are sometimes published in Hansard, if the Speaker gives his ruling during the sitting of the House. However, many of the rulings are private rulings and are not found in Hansard, since the record of these rulings is kept by the clerks only for the information of the Speaker and other officers of the House.² The purpose of Decisions of the Chair, a published collection of all rulings from 1857 to 1928, is to guide the Speaker and clerks in following the precedents. This publication is not for sale and is not available to members of the House of Commons. While May and Campion include a good many of the rules applying to questions, they do not include all of them. A published abridgment of these precedents, with rulings from 1929 on added, appeared in 1933.³ Campion classifies the precedents into three basic classes: (1) That questions shall be of a genuinely interrogative character, (2) That the Minister to whom they are addressed must be responsible for the subject matter of the questions, (3) That the question must not be a breach of constitutional etiquette.⁴ He states thirty-eight specific rules applying to questions.⁵ A few of these rules call for further comment beyond what is available in Campion's book.

If the facts stated in a question are of some moment, the Speaker may require prima facie proof of authenticity.⁶ Secretary of State Benn, relying on the traditional rule of the past, offered criticism of members who put questions about the motor cars used by Gandhi in India without factual foundation. "If we cannot depend on what we see in the Times," said Patrick J. H. Hannon, "what is to guide a Member in

putting questions?" The Speaker replied, " I should take all these things with a grain of salt."⁷ The Speaker has expressed the caution to members that they should look at questions before they put them. One time he observed that several questions were copied from the proceedings of the Indian Legislative Assembly on the same typewriter.⁸ The traditional rule appears to have been modified by practice. It is reasonable care about the facts on which questions are based which is required and not responsibility for the facts. Mr. Thorpe wanted questions like one making a "vile suggestion against the troops of Republican Spain" to be barred by the Speaker unless they could be "absolutely proved." Several members complained about the question which had been put by Sir H. Page Croft. Wedgwood Benn wanted to hold the questioner responsible for his statements. The Speaker said, "There were so many statements made from all sorts of sources that he was not sure whether any member would be prepared to accept responsibility for them." He concluded, "All he could do was to ask members to use care in framing their questions."⁹ This less strict interpretation of the responsibility of a member for the facts on which he bases his question is consistent with the spirit of Winston Churchill's admonition to remember "the great and long-standing importance of preserving a wide latitude in parliamentary questions."¹⁰

It is not proper to seek an expression of opinion by a Minister. A question on an abstract point of law asked by Mr. Giles of the Attorney-General was deleted by private ruling before appearing on the Notice Paper.¹¹ A question which would require an answer too long for question

hour would not be in order. A question about the rationalization of British industry was postponed until the close of questions in 1930. This unusual step was taken because of the length of the answer. The question was followed by supplementary questions just as though it had been asked during the regular question hour.¹²

It is not in order to put a question which has already been put. The responsibility for determining what is a proper time to wait before the same subject can be opened again is placed on the Minister concerned.¹³ However, questions which have been asked and answered, or answer refused, are put again without the clerks or the member being aware of the duplication. This violation of the rules and waste of money results from the sheer mass of questions—making it difficult to know what has been covered at question hour. As early as 1902 an index to questions was suggested to aid members in avoiding duplication.¹⁴ Austen Chamberlain said, at the time, he would approach the authorities about instituting an index. Nothing further was reported about an index until 1925, when two members of the House of Commons Library staff undertook an index of questions. Speaker Whitley, who instituted the experiment, expressed the hope, "That the index will result in a saving in the cost of printing and preparing answers to questions which now appear on the Paper, and which have been asked and answered previously."¹⁵ The Speaker thought that an average use by fifteen members each week in a ten week trial period was not sufficient to justify the expenditure of 150 £ a year. Likewise, he was convinced that there was no reduction in the number of unnecessary questions.¹⁶ Some members of the House and the two clerks who prepared the index were convinced that it did not have a fair trial. It was pointed out that the index was used only at the end of the 1925 session. Many

members never learned of the existence of the index until after it had been discontinued.¹⁷ The Treasury check on the index was on the basis of the number of different members who used it each week, and did not take into account multiple use by the same member. The clerks of the House of Commons made frequent use of the index, but this, likewise, was not taken into account in making the decision not to continue the index. In 1930 Speaker FitzRoy saw no reason to reconsider the decision of his predecessor as he thought conditions had not changed since 1926.¹⁸ He told the Procedure Committee in 1931, however, that he was willing to try the index again. He thought it would be a "good thing" if it could prevent the repetition of questions.¹⁹ To the impartial observer an adequate daily index of questions would seem fully justified for the aid it would give members and officers of the House of Commons and the relief that it would bring to civil servants harassed with questions they have already answered. It seems almost unnecessary to add that questions are not intended to provide information which is available in standard reference works or in official publications.²⁰ No member can expect to challenge the Speaker's decision that a question has been answered.²¹

A real problem is the enforcement of the rule against improper expressions--including ironical statements, innuendo, satire, and epithets. As the Speaker himself said, "A great deal of my time is occupied in taking adjectives out of hon. Members' questions."²² He ruled that the reference of Sir Kingsley Wood to "a matter of window dressing" in view of the coming election was an improper expression.²³ The greatest difficulty of all is the supplementary question. The Speaker can edit only after the damage has been done. When Mr. Thurtle said, "Is it the intention of the hon. and gallant Member's Department

to see that the needles and the thread with which these buttons are sewn on are also British products; and that the cotton from which the thread is made is also British grown," what could the Speaker do except say that it was "an ironic question."²⁴ Trivial and hypothetical questions are out of order. A question is not permitted to assume the character of a speech. A member is not supposed to use questions to seek information on matters of past history for the purposes of argument.

The rulings of the Speaker are most frequently concerned with the question of the responsibility of the Minister. The Speaker has stated the general rule that, "Nothing in a question put to any Department shall relate to matters for which the Minister responsible for that Department has no actual responsibility." He said further, "That is one of the strictest Rules governing questions in this House."²⁵ As a courtesy information is sometimes provided even when the responsibility of a department is not involved.²⁶ Questions on the internal affairs of foreign powers or the Dominions are out of order because the responsibility of the Government is not involved.²⁷ Authority transferred to Northern Ireland or the Indian Provincial governments is likewise outside the scope of question hour.²⁸ Colonies which are not self-governing and British Mandates are within the orbit of question hour, but mandates of the Dominions are not.²⁹ Question hour does not cover matters of local government for which no central department is responsible.³⁰

It is not proper to ask questions about the activities of organizations for which the Government is not directly responsible--as, for

example, labor unions, banks, the stock exchange. One organization which is difficult to classify is the British Broadcasting Corporation. It is a public, semi-independent corporation attached to the Post Office--for which the Government is responsible--which lies outside the direct responsibility of any Minister and yet for which the Government is responsible in respect to basic policy. Ordinarily questions about BBC are disallowed.³¹ Some questions about it may be in order. The Speaker himself said it was a matter of individual ingenuity to see if questions about this broadcasting agency would be allowable.³² Ministers are not responsible for Royal Commissions nor for departmental committees, although this latter rule is not entirely clear.³³ A Minister cannot be held responsible for statements in the press or by private individuals or unofficial bodies, nor can he be expected to comment on the accuracy of such reports. Speaker Fitzroy aptly put it thus, "A Minister cannot be responsible for what appears in the Manchester Guardian."³⁴ A Labour Government cannot be expected to answer for the attitude of the Conservative Party toward Soviet Russia.³⁵ Although a Minister's speech does not involve the responsibility of the Government when it is delivered outside Parliament, it is permissible to inquire if his views represent the views of the Government, but such a question is out of order about a speech outside Parliament by an under-secretary.³⁶ One Minister cannot be expected to answer for his colleague, nor is he responsible for his predecessor.³⁷

In the third grouping which Campion made are a diverse collection dealing with nice questions of constitutional and parliamentary propriety. One does not introduce the name of the Sovereign or Royal family or cast reflections in their direction, or even refer to the influence of the Crown.

Politeness forbids inquiries on the prerogative of mercy and ecclesiastical patronage. Mr. Balfour once refused a question from Gibson Bowles, that famous questioner of another generation, on the subject of "Honorific Distinctions."³⁸ It is proper to inquire about the advice tendered the Crown, but it is out of order to ask a Minister what advice he proposes to give. Action of household officials of the King are not within the control of question hour--as, for example, it would be out of order to inquire of the Lord Chamberlain about the licensing of plays. Likewise, the Speaker has refused to admit questions on the conduct of County Court judges, even though the power of dismissal lay with the Lord Chancellor.³⁹ However, the decisions of Umpires under the Unemployment Insurance Acts were considered to be subject to inquiry at question hour, at least in 1931.⁴⁰ It is not proper to make discourteous references to the House of Lords--traditionally referred to as "the other place." In 1929, for example, Mr. Mander asked the intentions of the Government as to ending or mending the House of Lords? Prime Minister MacDonald replied that the Government had not considered the question. A supplementary question was put by the questioner, "Will the Prime Minister consider removing this picturesque relic to the British Museum?" Mr. Speaker reminded the House that "Hon. Members must not make disrespectful remarks about the other place."⁴¹

Questions must not criticize the decisions of the House of Commons, nor cast reflections on the decision of a court, nor prejudice a case under trial.⁴² Decisions secret by nature are not to be asked about at question hour--for example, decisions of the Cabinet, Committee of Imperial Defense, and Cabinet committees, as well as advice given the Crown by Law Officers of the Crown.

Personal charges are not permitted nor reflections on persons otherwise than in their public capacity.⁴³ Invidious statements are out of order. It is not proper to cast reflections on persons or bodies, or to introduce their names for purposes of advertisement. The Speaker, when questioned about reflections on the Grand Mufti--charges that he was spreading propaganda-- ruled that it was "quite out of order either by a supplementary question or question to cast reflections on distinguished strangers, or on other strangers."⁴⁴ It is the rule that questions making discourteous references to a friendly foreign nation are not allowed. However a question telling the Soviet Government that "the limit of patience" had been reached was allowed because the Speaker thought the statements of the Foreign Secretary from the floor of the House that there had been complaints against Russian actions justified the question.⁴⁵ Questions must not anticipate other questions already on the Paper or motions of which notice has been given if these motions must be decided without debate.⁴⁶ Questions may not be used if the rules provide a more convenient method. Questions cannot be used to impeach the conduct of those whose conduct may be challenged only on substantive motion.⁴⁷ It is improper to ask for information which should be moved for as a Return, or to suggest amendments to bills and resolutions. Things being considered by a Parliamentary committee are not to be raised at question time.⁴⁸ Not to be raised at question hour are matters of current debate or answers to questions given during the current session. This makes it improper to raise as a question a subject discussed on the adjournment.⁴⁹

It is the authority of the Speaker which gives these rules their binding quality, but it is the clerks at the Table who enforce the rules.

The Speaker has ruled that the clerks have full power to edit questions, and, also, that it was impractical to consult the member on every change made in his question.⁵⁰ Conservative members of the House during the Labour Government (1929-1931) raised a large number of questions on Russian affairs, but not all of their questions were allowed. When a protest was made at the disallowance of a question on compulsory labor in Russia, the Speaker made this reply:

The hon. and gallant Member asks me a question which has often been asked before in regard to what I may term censorship of questions. The duty cast upon the Clerks in this respect is very difficult and onerous, and I think is generally fulfilled to the general satisfaction of the House.

There may be some questions which Members think should be passed which are not passed, but I do not think that I should be serving any useful purpose if I entered into the merits, or otherwise, of any particular question, or set of questions. Very often questions are put which only a day or two before had been answered, and it appears to me, as I think it will to the House, to be a thorough waste of time to keep on asking the same question over and over again. That very much applies to the case which the hon. and gallant Gentleman has brought to my notice.⁵¹

There have been suggestions that the Speaker should undertake the additional task of censoring questions of purely local or private interest. On one occasion a member took the time to analyze 4,345 questions asked in the 1923 session to April 23. He classified 623 of these questions as purely personal and local in nature. He put 116 of the 813

questions asked April 11 to April 19 in the same category. The Speaker thought he could not attempt to save Parliamentary time by sorting out such questions in order to require written answer for them. He thought a reliance on the consideration of members for each other would be "far better than any endeavour to impose restrictions on them."⁵² Later that year Speaker Whitley repeated his predecessor's suggestion that local and personal questions be put as unstarred questions.⁵³ The same member raised the problem of local and personal questions again in 1927. Speaker Whitley was still disinclined "to exercise a censorship" of local and personal questions and still willing to rely on the judgment of the members asking the questions.⁵⁴ However, in 1923 he had disallowed questions on the forthcoming budget because of the excessive number of such questions.⁵⁵ Advisory opinions on what is permissible in questions are not given by the Speaker.⁵⁶

Before the Procedure Committee of 1931, the use of question hour for trivial and unimportant matters was alleged to be due to the delay in getting answers to unstarred questions.⁵⁷ Sir Austen Chamberlain proposed that the Speaker remove questions "of no general interest" from the starred list and transfer them to the unstarred list.⁵⁸ The evidence and opinion evoked in the 1931 Procedure Committee prompted the 1932 Committee to propose a third type of question to be indicated by a dagger. Because the Speaker thought such an innovation would be confusing, the Government did not act on the Committee's suggestion.⁵⁹ When protest at the delay in answers to unstarred questions was made in 1937, Prime Minister Chamberlain said that he had called the attention of the departments to the desirability of avoiding "undue delay" in providing answers to unstarred questions. He announced the policy of notifying a member if he could not get an answer within four days. One member protested that this was too long, but the Prime Minister insisted four days was reasonable.⁶⁰ A further change

in practice was suggested by the Prime Minister later the same year. He proposed that members should put unstarred questions down for a specific day, and that Ministers should answer, if possible, on that day.⁶¹ In response to what was probably an arranged question, Chamberlain stated that the new policy had brought increased use of written-answer questions, and had relieved the pressure at question hour.⁶² At the same time, he indicated that a reduction of the daily limit on questions from three to two would have saved only a negligible amount of time--an average of three questions a day.

Since the Standing Orders are specific about what kind of topics can be raised on the adjournment motion made at the close of question hour, the "internal" rules applying to this procedure have been confined to interpretation of the "urgency" or "public importance" of a proposed subject. The almost complete disappearance of the motion for adjournment under Standing Order No. 8 has likewise contributed to the paucity of rulings. Campion summarizes the rules on subjects which are proper to raise by this procedure under the three headings: (1) definite matters, (2) matters which are urgent, (3) matters of public importance.⁶³ To be definite has been interpreted as preventing more than one motion on the same subject at the same sitting. Likewise, a motion must deal with only one subject. The motion must be framed in general terms, but it must also concern a specific case. Hypothetical matters are out of order. "Official information must be available." In the second place, urgency requires that a subject be raised at the first opportunity. If it can conveniently be raised on some other occasion--such as in Committee of Supply-- or if notice has been given on the subject, it is not urgent enough to qualify under the Standing Orders. Postponement of an adjournment motion was refused May 3, 1922, but was permitted March 13, 1922

and February 24, 1921.⁶⁴ Earlier, an adjournment motion was postponed without prejudice as to urgency until definite information was available.⁶⁵ The refusal of leave to put an adjournment motion under Standing Order No. 8 is considered by the Speaker as proof that the subject is not urgent.⁶⁶ The third requirement of public importance is satisfied if the matter is larger than an individual grievance.

In addition to these basic requirements set by the Standing Orders, further rules have been enforced. The responsibility of the Government is as essential for an adjournment motion as it is for a question. The responsibility of the Government is not involved in the exercise of statutory discretion in trade disputes, nor in "an attack by newspapers upon certain Members."⁶⁷ The Government is not responsible for preventing "the holding of a political meeting."⁶⁸ The attack by Manchester police upon a peaceable demonstration lies outside Governmental responsibility.⁶⁹ "Official action beyond the ordinary administration of law" must be involved--it is not involved in advice as to the exercise of the prerogative of mercy.⁷⁰ Some subjects are not appropriate to the adjournment motion--"grievances which can be remedied only by legislation, matters involving privilege," and the conduct of those whose conduct can be challenged only by substantive motion.⁷¹ It is not proper to raise matters already decided in the current session, nor is it proper to anticipate the report of a select committee or a motion of which notice has been given.⁷²

The practice of the House of Commons as interpreted through the rulings of the Speaker has done more to shape the day to day rules enforced in regard to questions and adjournment motions than have changes in the Standing Orders. These rulings concern the asking of

questions and the answers to them and the important matter of what is permitted in a question under the decisions of the Speaker. The rulings about adjournment motions are less numerous, but they too have been important in fixing the practice of the House. The rules have become a law of Parliament comparable in extent and manner of determination to the venerable Common law. They are enforced by the Speaker with the acquiescence of the House and are subject to modification by formal resolution of the House and by modification of the Standing Orders.

¹Parliamentary Papers, 1930- 31, VIII (No. 161), Minutes of Evidence, p. 444, memorandum by the Clerk of the House of Commons.

²Ibid., p. 400 (questions 4070 ff.), Sir Horace Dawkins, then Clerk of the House of Commons, told the 1931 Committee that most of the 200 rulings given by the Speaker since 1860 had been private rulings and were available only in Mr. Champion's book, or in May, Law and Usage of Parliament (1924). The whole question of private rulings of the Speaker was raised in the Procedure Committee. It was brought out that the records made by the clerks of private rulings were considered as confidential (p. 403, question 4117), but Sir Horace Dawkins, Clerk of the House of Commons at the time, agreed with Sir Hugh O'Neill that there was no reason why the information contained in private rulings should not be made available to Members of the House of Commons (p. 403, question 4121). The chairman of the Committee concluded that these private rulings of the Speaker formed "an unwritten law which is a good thing" for the House of Commons (p. 403, question 4122).

³Decisions of the Chair, Illustrative of the Procedure of the House, 1857 to 1932 (1933). This publication is by its own description for the information of foreign parliaments. It is not for sale. The author was permitted to consult it in the House of Commons Library.

⁴G. F. M. Champion, An Introduction to the Procedure of the House of Commons (1929), p. 127.

⁵Ibid., pp. 128-130.

⁶Ibid., p. 128; Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 101-102.

⁷252 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 2390-2391.

⁸211 ibid. 8.

⁹Times (London), June 28, 1938, p. 8.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 97-98.

¹²237 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 2719-2721 (April 15).

¹³173 ibid. 436-437.

¹⁴108 Parl. Deb. 4s. 739-740, the suggestion was as follows:

If a daily index were then kept it would prevent Members putting Questions which had previously been answered. At present it was impossible for Members to follow the proceedings of Parliament from day to day unless they searched through a file of The Times, Whereas if they had an index in the Library they would be able to ascertain exactly what had been done in regard to any particular Question in which they were interested.

¹⁵186 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 231, in reply to a question by Geoffrey Peto, the Speaker indicated that the experiment of the index was being made as the result of the general request of the House. The index was begun July 1, 1925.

¹⁶ 193 ibid. 1386-1388. 203 ibid. 386-387 (March 2, 1927), Speaker Whitley indicated that he did not propose to try an index again.

¹⁷ Parliamentary Papers, 1930-31, VIII (No. 161), Minutes of Evidence, p. 423 (question 4327).

¹⁸ 239 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 37-38, in answer to Sir W. Davidson, the Speaker gave a brief account of the experience of Speaker Whitley. He indicated that the experiment was for ten weeks.

¹⁹ Parliamentary Papers, 1930-31, VIII (No. 161), Minutes of Evidence, p. 423 (questions 4326-4328).

²⁰ 244 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1609, the Speaker said, "It is very unusual for a Minister to give information which an hon. Member can acquire for himself." See also Decisions of the Chair (1933), p. 101.

²¹ 254 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1467-1471, the member who refused to accept the ruling of the Speaker that his question had been answered was McGovern. He was suspended from the service of the House for his defiance of the Speaker by a vote of 315 to 16. When he refused to leave he was forcibly removed. Afterwards he was suspended by the Speaker for the remainder of the session.

²² 199 ibid. 1828-1840, the Speaker continued, "This one escaped me. It shows the value of our rule that hon. Members must not introduce their own adjectives on the Paper at Question Time." The adjective objected to was the word "widespread" applied to the phrase, abuse of Unemployment Insurance.

23 23
245 ibid. 225.

24 205 ibid. 1609.

25 224 ibid. 1778.

26 W. I. Jennings, Parliament (1940), pp. 98-99.

27 171 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 917-918; 162 ibid. 2246-2247, the Speaker said, "It is quite impossible, once having transferred responsibility to other bodies, that we should deal with matters on the floor of this House."

28 163 ibid. 1623-1625, the Speaker indicated that questions were in order only on the exercise of powers reserved to the British Parliament.

29 180 ibid. 640; 208 ibid. 2141-2143, this latter was the ruling of Secretary of State Amery. His opinion was supported by the Speaker.

30 233 ibid. 1203-1205, a question about tram workers at Hull was disallowed. See also 199 ibid. 1946.

31 233 ibid. 246-248, the Postmaster-General maintained he was not responsible for the details of service.

32 285 ibid. 1578.

33 See 172 ibid. 214 for ruling that it is improper to impute allegations against a committee set up by the House. Actually the Committee in question was set up by the Board of Trade.

³⁴ 230 ibid. 1268. See also 223 ibid. 829, 3193.

³⁵ 236 ibid. 1295.

³⁶ Decisions of the Chair (1933), p. 97; Times (London), March 22, 1938, p. 8, the Speaker pointed out that the same rules applied to supplementary questions that governed "questions on the paper."

³⁷ 236 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 897; 241 ibid. 1072.

³⁸ London Daily News, November 11, 1902, p. 4, Bowles reminded Prime Minister Balfour that the prerogative of the Crown had been discussed in the House for eight hundred years. Balfour replied, "Yes, Sir, and it may have to be debated again, but I do not think that anything is gained by question and answer on the subject." See Decisions of the Chair (1933), p. 96, for a private ruling on the impropriety of a question about honoring General Townshend for his action at Kut (May 2, 1916). See ibid., pp. 96-97 for private ruling disallowing a question on the decision with regard to a person lying under sentence of death. The Home Secretary refused to answer the question by private notice--on the ground that it was against constitutional practice. See also 319 Parl. Deb. 3s. 253, 1103, and 340 ibid. 128.

³⁹ 184 Parl. Deb. 4s. 831; Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 100-101.

⁴⁰ 253 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1917-1918 (June 18, 1931).

⁴¹ 230 ibid. 1290.

⁴² 225 ibid. 1115, the Speaker implied that a supplementary question

dealing with the decision of the chief insurance officer of a court of referees would be out of order. See also Sir Thomas Erskine May, Law and Usage of Parliament (1924), p. 243, note 4.

⁴³172 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 928-930, the Speaker affirms that criticism should be directed against the Minister rather than his subordinates, because "The responsibility for taking action lies with the Minister, and not with the subordinates."

⁴⁴237 ibid. 2171-2172, the Speaker said:

The original point of Order put to me by the hon. and gallant Member for Chelmsford (Colonel Howard-Bury) was whether it was in order, in asking a supplementary question to cast reflections on a distinguished stranger. I can cover all the questions which have been asked with reference to that matter by saying that it is quite out of order either by a supplementary question or question to cast reflections on distinguished strangers, or on other strangers.

It was Lieutenant-Commander Kenworthy who put the supplementary questions complained of. He in turn drew attention to charges made by Mr. Marjoribanks in question 19 of the regular questions. 187 ibid. 1552, the Speaker ruled that it was improper to refer to the "gullibility of Colonial Governors." The Colonial Secretary thought the expression was unconstitutional.

⁴⁵202 ibid. 556.

⁴⁶203 ibid. 560.

⁴⁷Campion, op. cit., p. 144, gives these as the Heir to the Throne, Viceroy of India, Governors-General of the Dominions, Lord Chancellor, Speaker, Chairman of Ways and Means, Members of either House of Parliament, and judges in the superior courts of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. A question concerning a Governor-General has been removed from the Order Book because it infringed this rule. See Decisions of the Chair (1933), p. 100, which refers to Notices of Motions, 1913, p. 815. See also 55 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 2023-2024, 2057-2058.

⁴⁸Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 98-99; 237 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1926.

⁴⁹226 ibid. 1600.

⁵⁰158 Parl. Deb. 4s. 1124; Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 103-104.

⁵¹237 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 2902-2903.

⁵²163 ibid. 683.

⁵³165 ibid. 657-658.

⁵⁴211 ibid. 481-482.

⁵⁵168 ibid. 355-357, the Speaker thought questions about the current budget were suitable for questions, but thought the forthcoming budget more suitable for debate.

⁵⁶248 ibid. 1930.

⁵⁷ Parliamentary Papers, 1930-31, VIII (No. 161), Minutes of Evidence, pp. 396-397 (questions 4013, 4014-4018).

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 237 (questions 2500-2502).

⁵⁹ Cf. supra, pp. ~~93-94~~ .

⁶⁰ 326 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 2405-2406.

⁶¹ 352 ibid. 1574-1576.

⁶² 353 ibid. 1035-1037.

⁶³ Op. cit., pp. 132-133.

⁶⁴ Ibid.; Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 3-9, cites 151 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1765. One of these motions was postponed on March 13 and permitted to be made on March 15, 1922.

⁶⁵ Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 7-8; 134 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 179, 352, 552, 682. For other cases see Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 7-10.

⁶⁶ Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 6-7, the motion was supported by only twenty-eight of the requisite forty members.

⁶⁷ Campion, op. cit., pp. 132-133; 135 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 2226-2229.

⁶⁸155 ibid. 191-192.

⁶⁹150 ibid. 1183; Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 3-5.

⁷⁰Campion, op. cit., pp. 132-133. In 1931 the rules of the German Reichstag were amended to make interpellations, or questions, outside the competence of the Reichstag, specifically referring to criminal proceedings, impossible. See 424 Verhandlungen des Reichstags 1591 A.

⁷¹Cf. supra, p. 146 note 47 .

⁷²130 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 398, 612; Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 5-6, for rulings on matters referred to select committees. A list of the rulings on adjournment motions complete to 1924 is to be found in May, op. cit. (1924), but it is not as simple and convenient as is the arrangement of Campion, op. cit., nor is it as recent. The anticipation of a subject on which a notice of motion has been given would not prevent an adjournment motion if the notice were given with the purpose in view of blocking discussion on the subject, since the Speaker could rule that the motion of which notice had been given was a blocking motion and permit the discussion on the adjournment motion to take place.

CHAPTER X

FACTS AND FIGURES*

The expanding importance of question hour in the English House of Commons can be traced in the increasing number of questions asked. After 1873 official records were kept of the number of notices of questions. Since by that time it was the almost universal practice to give formal notice of questions, these statistics are a reliable index of the number of questions asked. The first printed notice of a question was in 1835.¹ The seven notices printed in 1835 did not represent by any means all the questions asked since the older practice of giving personal notice to the Member of Parliament who was responsible for the subject matter of the question continued for a number of years after 1835.² Some idea of the trend before 1873 can be seen from the incomplete record gleaned from a number of sources.

Year	Number of questions
1846 ³	69
1847 ⁴	129
1848 ⁴	222
1850 ⁴	212
1857 ⁵	451
1860 ⁶	699
1867 ⁷	912
1870 ⁸	1203

*See the tables in the appendix.

The marked increase in the number of questions which is to be noted after 1878 is to be explained in part at least by three factors. The discontinuance of the practice of reading questions at question hour made it possible to deal with a larger number of questions in the same amount of time.⁹ The increase in the size of the Irish Home Rule Party was a second influence working toward increased use of questions. A third, and probably the most important influence, was the increased pressure on question hour resulting from the reform of the rules in 1882--these rules greatly decreased the opportunities of the private member.¹⁰ It is interesting to observe that when the reading of notices of questions was discontinued in 1886 the number of questions asked took another jump.¹¹ In this year the number of questions topped five thousand.¹² As one might expect, questions vary in number somewhat in proportion to the number of parliamentary days in the session.¹³

The half million questions asked in the House of Commons between 1873 and the present time stand in marked contrast to the fifteen hundred questions asked in the French Chamber of Deputies from 1871 to 1932. Questions for oral answer have never played the vital role in the French Chamber of Deputies that they have in the House of Commons. The number of questions in the French Chamber of Deputies between 1871 and 1900 varied from one in 1877 to thirty-six in 1900.¹⁴

The Boer War had a marked influence on question hour. There were as many questions in the 118 parliamentary days of 1901 as there had been in the 226 parliamentary days of the 1893-94 session.¹⁵ It was this pressure which in 1902 stimulated the Balfour reforms in procedure. The institution of the written-answer (unstarred question) and the

end of the war both contributed to the decline in questions put down for oral answer at question time. The time limit for question hour was another of the reforms adopted in 1902 which worked in the same direction.¹⁶ The number of the new unstarred questions varied between seventeen hundred and thirty-six hundred.¹⁷ By 1906 the number of starred questions was more than equal to the number of questions asked before the reforms of 1902.¹⁸ This continued increase in oral-answer questions prompted the limit of eight questions put on each member by the Speaker in 1909.¹⁹ The next two sessions show a drop in oral-answer questions.²⁰

The pressure of the tense years preceding the First World War brought a still further increase in the number of questions. There were over sixteen thousand questions in the 1912-13 session of Parliament.²¹ During the war years the number of starred questions remained at a high level, probably because the emergency operation of the Government and Parliament closed the normal channels of procedure to the private member. When the daily limit for members was lowered from eight to four and then to three, there was a drop in the number of starred questions.²² Probably the end of the war had as much to do with the drop as did the reduction of the daily limit. Whatever the cause there were only some eleven thousand questions in the regular session of 1921.²³ The number of questions rose again during the Labour Government of Ramsay MacDonald. But under the National Government of the same Prime Minister the starred questions dropped again.²⁴ The Conservative Government of Stanley Baldwin and the National Governments of MacDonald and Baldwin produced relatively fewer starred questions than the year after the Czechoslovakian crisis when starred questions rose above fifteen thousand.²⁵

The English question hour has not been successfully imitated either in France or Germany. However, since 1909 the French Chamber of Deputies has made use of the question for written answer.²⁶ The German Reichstag after 1922 used a form of question in which only the members signing the question received the answer and neither question nor answer was printed.²⁷ Numerically the question for written answer in the French Chamber of Deputies measures up to the unstarred (written-answer) question in the English House of Commons.²⁸ An examination of the questions for written answer in the French Chamber of Deputies reveals that most of them are of personal and local concern and of little use as instruments of control, although widely used by all political groups.²⁹ One would reach a similar conclusion about the usefulness of unstarred questions as instruments of control in the English House of Commons. The only criticism made in England is that the unstarred question is not employed as frequently as it should be thus resulting in unnecessary starred questions being asked.

Mrs. M. B. Fox has analyzed 520 questions asked in the House of Commons in 1860. A comparison with my analysis of 9,366 starred questions asked in 1929-30 reveals the tremendous expansion of question hour since 1860.³⁰ The average number of starred questions on the Paper each parliamentary day in 1929-30 was 93. I estimate that only 63 were answered on the average. There was an average of 74 supplementary questions asked each parliamentary day in 1929-30 compared to a total of 48 supplementary questions for the whole session of 1860. The failure of Hansard to report all questions and supplementaries at this time may explain the small number of supplementary questions reported by Mrs. Fox, who made her study from Hansard. This probably also accounts for Mrs. Fox reporting only 520 questions while Redlich reported 699.³¹

When time runs out or when the question is not answered because the questioner is absent, the answers to starred questions not answered at question time are printed along with the answers to unstarred questions. For the convenience of the House of Commons a Minister may print long complicated answers instead of reading them out in the House--thus amounting to a transfer of a starred into an unstarred question. The average number of starred questions not reached for a parliamentary day was 30 during the 1929-30 session of Parliament--amounting to 4,541 for the whole session of a total of 13,097 starred questions. The average number not reached during a four week period of 1939 was 44.³² This official compilation showed an average of 119 starred questions each parliamentary day of which the average number reached at question hour was 75. It was also reported that the average number of supplementary questions each question day was 82.5. A comparison of the number of unstarred questions and the number of questions given written answer produces the following estimates of the number of starred questions given written answer:

Year	No. of starred questions given written answer ³³	Year	No. of starred questions given written answer ³³
1924-25	2,388	1929-30	3,619
1926	1,341	1930-31*	1,589
1927	1,172	1931-32	786
1928	940	1932-33	941
1928-29	1,283		

*This is an underestimate as data for whole session were used for unstarred questions but only to August, 1931 for questions given written answer.

The number of questions directed to a Minister reflect the public interest in the department for which he is responsible.³⁴ The Prime Minister and the heads of the major departments answer the bulk of questions. In 1929-30 it was the Foreign Secretary who stood first on the list with 1,482 starred and supplementary questions answered at question hour. The Prime Minister answered 1,018 starred and supplementary questions, but his record was exceeded by both the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Health.³⁵ The total number of questions was smaller from 1924 to 1929 for each session but it was usually the same Ministers who were most questioned.³⁶ The same observation would hold for the sessions of 1931-32 and 1932-33. The Minister of Transport and the Postmaster-General are not so busy at question hour but they give more answers in writing than some of the Ministers who outrank them numerically at question hour. Likewise the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, and Secretary for India do not rank as high numerically in questions given written answer as in oral ones.³⁷ The range of subject matter is narrower with written-answer questions than it is with oral-answer ones. The lower numerical rank of Postmaster-General and Minister of Transport at question hour may be explained by their coming near the end of the schedule of Ministers for oral-answer questions.³⁸ It is also probable that more matters of local and personal interest fall within the responsibility of these two Ministers.³⁹

A study of the 1929-30 session reveals that 14 per cent of the starred and supplementary questions were in the realm of foreign affairs and that 7 per cent of the questions concerned Russia.⁴⁰ Because of the difficulties associated with the depression we find 12 per cent of the questions concerned with labor, unemployment, and relief. The

interest in the British Commonwealth of Nations and in the problems of India is reflected in the 12 per cent of all questions which were concerned with imperial affairs. It is interesting that many subjects attracted just about the same amount of interest. There was about 4 per cent of all starred and supplementary questions asked in each of the following fields: Navy, trade and commerce, agriculture, education, Scotland, business of the House of Commons, industry, and internal affairs (including prisons, courts, and immigration).

Most of the members of the House of Commons ask few or no questions. A handful of members such as Harry Day, Labour, Sir Kingsley Wood, Conservative, and Lieutenant Commander Kenworthy, Labour ask hundreds each session.⁴¹ With the exception of these two Labour members most of the persistent questioners from 1929 to 1931 were members of the Conservative Opposition Party. During the Baldwin Government from 1924 to 1929 there were a few Labour members who asked more than a hundred questions each session.⁴² The reputation of Harry Day is revealed by the chant which sometimes greeted him in the House of Commons, "another Day."⁴³ Gibson Bowles, and "weary" Weir who sat for Ross and Cromarty from 1892 to 1911 are champion questioners of an earlier day.⁴⁴ Perhaps one of the most significant facts about who asked questions in the 1929-30 session is that 14 per cent of the starred and supplementary questions were put by former Ministers.⁴⁵ It is also to be observed that several members specialized on one or two subjects--often lying within their responsibilities when they were themselves Ministers.⁴⁶

The importance of political parties at question hour can be shown by an analysis of questions asked by party members:

ORAL-ANSWER QUESTIONS*

1929-30

Party**	Seats	% of Seats	Private- Notice	% of P-M Questions	Starred	% of Starred Questions	Supple- mentary	% of sup- plementary questions	Total oral-answer	% of total oral-answer questions
C	260	42.0	46	52.0	4,882	53.0	6,665	59.5	11,593	56.0
Lab	280	46.0	34	33.6	3,246	34.6	3,259	29.0	6,539	31.7
L	58	10.0	9	10.0	1,224	13.0	1,328	11.0	2,471	12.0
Ind	5	0.8	0	0.0	19	0.2	34	0.3	53	0.25
Co-op	7	1.0	1	1.1	35	0.4	15	0.1	51	0.25
TOTAL	610		110		9,406		11,211		20,707	

*Robert W. McCulloch, "Question Time in the British House of Commons," 27 American Political Science Review 974 (December, 1933). This compilation was made from Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons, Vol., 229-243 (June 25, 1929 to August 1, 1930).

**Party strength is based on Parliamentary Gazette, No. 28, September, 1930, p. 83. C is Conservative Party; Lab, Labour Party; L, Liberal Party; Ind, Independent; Co-op, Co-operator--affiliated with Labour Party. No data are included for two Irish Nationalist members. Three seats were vacant, two of which had been Labour seats and one Conservative. These five seats bring the total to the 615 which was the total membership of the House of Commons in 1930.

QUESTIONS*

Party	Seats	1932		Non- Oral Answer	Total	Per Cent Seats	Per Cent Questions
		Oral Answer	Supple- mentary				
Conservative	458	339	303	39	581	75.0	48.0
Nat. Liberal	35	26	24	2	52	6.0	5.0
Labour	53	264	219	31	514	9.0	43.0
Nat. Labour	13	1	0	0	1	2.0	0.08
Liberal	32	30	24	1	55	6.0	5.0
Total	591	660	470	73	1203		

From the evidence there is no doubt that the Official Opposition makes extensive use of question hour. A complaint made by a Liberal Member of Parliament in 1929 aroused my interest. When the Speaker suggested that it might become necessary to limit the use of the supplementary question, this Liberal said:

If we are to be asked to curtail supplementary questions, may we in turn say to the Prime Minister that, since it is normally the right of the Opposition to put questions, the right hon. Gentleman should appeal to his own Back Benchers to put fewer questions on the Paper.⁴⁷

A comparison of the table for 1929-30 and that of 1932 bears out the assumption of this Liberal Member of Parliament that Labour backbench members ask more questions when their party is in power than do the members of the Conservative Party under a Conservative Government.

*William Carter Lucas made this study for the late Prof. J. R. Hayden at the University of Michigan from Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons (May and June, 1932). The total membership of the House of Commons in 1932 was 615.

To be sure any party in the opposition asks more questions than when it is in power, but members of the Labour Party still ask a substantial number of questions even when their party is in power. A comparison of the 1929-30 session with May and June of 1931-32 session shows clearly the more active role of Labour backbenchers when Labour is in power and the less active role of Conservative backbenchers when there is a Conservative Government. This comparison is put on a basis of 100 question days in order to facilitate accuracy.⁴⁸

Party*	1929-30						May, June, 1932 (1931-32 session)							
	Average No. of questions per member			Average No. of questions per member for 100 question days			Average No. of questions per member				Average No. of questions per member for 100 question days			
	Oral-answer	Supplementary	Total	Oral-answer	Supplementary	Total	Oral-answer	Supplementary	Non-oral answer	Total	Oral-answer	Supplementary	Non-oral answer	Total
C	18	26	45	12	18	30	.7	.4	.1	1.4	2.2	1.3	0.3	4.4
Lab	12	12	24	8	8	16	5.0	4.1	.6	9.7	15.6	12.8	1.9	30.3
Co-op**	5	2.5	7	3	2	5								
NLa							.08	.0	0	.08	.3	0	0	.3
L	21	21	43	14	14	29	.9	.75	.03	1.7	2.8	2.3	.1	5.1
NL							.7	.7	.06	1.5	2.2	2.2	.2	4.7
Ind	2	7	11	1.3	5	7								

*C, Conservative; La, Labour; Co-op, Co-operator; NLa, National Labour; L, Liberal; NL, National Liberal; Ind, Independent. Based on 32 of 123 question days in 1930-31 session and on 149 of 149 question days in 1929-30.

**The Co-operator group were supporting the Labour Government in 1929-30.

From the above comparison we see that the average per Labour member for the 1929-30 session was sixteen questions every hundred question days. When the National Government was in power in 1932, the Conservative Party members asked four and four-tenths questions per member for each one hundred question days. The Labour Party in the Opposition had almost the same average per member for each hundred question days as did the Conservative Party in the Opposition in 1929-30. It might be said that the curiosity of Conservative members declines when they cross from the Opposition side of the House to the Government side. There is a spectacular decline in the number of supplementary questions put by Conservative members from eighteen per member for each one hundred question days in 1929-30 when the party was in the Opposition to just over one per member for each hundred question days in 1932 when the Conservative Party dominated the National Government. The increase in number of supplementary questions by Labour Members when they went into the Opposition was about one-half from eight to twelve and eight-tenths. The conclusions from this evidence of the use of questions by the political parties can be expressed in ratios. Conservative Party members ask seven times as many questions when they are in the Opposition as they do when they are in power; Labour members ask only twice as many questions out of power as in power. It may be concluded that the Labour Party member must find question hour a convenient time to spur his leaders on to action. There are those who feel that the individual Labour member is unwilling to become a mere cipher in the party machine in the same way Conservative Party members do. It was the multiplication

of the number of questions asked by Conservative members when they went out of power and the continued use of questions by Labour members which brought about the large number of questions during the Labour Government's tenure. It was the decline of questions from the Conservative side, and the small size of the Labour Opposition which brought the marked drop in total number of questions after 1931.

The cost of questions in time and money is considerable. Each session of Parliament sees six to eighteen thousand queries. These must be processed in the proper departments where they take time away from departmental activities. Parliament's printing costs are increased. There have been well over a half million questions since 1900. This might be measured as a monetary expense at one half million sterling, if we accept the estimate of Sir Horace Dawkins of one pound sterling for each question.⁴⁹ This seems a small cost indeed for an institution which has made a signal contribution to the efficiency of representative democracy. Stanley Baldwin expressed the view of most Members of Parliament when he said, "It is no doubt true that considerable expenditure of time and money is involved in answering Parliamentary Questions." He thought, however, that it was not the wish of the House of Commons "that the Government should take steps to curtail Members' rights to question Ministers."⁵⁰ Civil servants too recognize the value of question hour. The cost is little indeed compared to the value of question hour.

The extensive use of question hour and the great public interest it arouses both assure the continuation of the institution. By contrast, the disuse of the English interpellation (the motion to adjourn provided by Standing Order No. 8) has reduced it to an insignificant role in the House of Commons. Since 1920 this form has scarcely been used, although it should be pointed out that from 1919 to 1939 over sixty motions were refused by the Speaker.⁵¹ The decline of the adjournment motion began in 1882 when the right to make the motion came under strict control of the Speaker, and when the support of forty members was first required. The value of the institution to the private member was seriously impaired in 1902 when the debate was separated from the motion and was postponed to a less important and less interesting part of the sitting. A third force which worked to impair the importance of discussions under this form of proceeding was the increasing reluctance of the Speaker after 1919 to permit the motion to be made and his insistence that matters be raised at other appropriate occasions. In 1935 Lieutenant-Colonel Heneage pointed out that the motion had been permitted only six times in ten years.⁵² Prime Minister Baldwin himself recognized the decline of the adjournment motion as a form of criticism of the government but he concluded that it would be difficult to allow greater freedom in moving the adjournment under Standing Order No. 8 without it becoming "an intolerable burden on the whole House."⁵³

The use of questions and interpellations in the German Reichstag forces us to conclude that these forms of procedure did not have any substantial importance in the practice of responsible democratic

government in Weimar Germany.⁵⁴ In the French Chamber of Deputies, the interpellation assumed a most important role in representative government--being in fact the very heart of responsible parliamentary government.⁵⁵ The oral question was infrequently used and of no significance. The written question and answer attained a position of importance in the practice of the Chamber of Deputies. The written-answer (unstarred) question continues a useful and valued procedure in the House of Commons, but the discussions under Standing Order No. 8 (adjournment motion to discuss a matter of urgent public importance) have lost almost all significance. It is question hour which is the outstanding characteristic of the House of Commons and of English parliamentary democracy. Question hour has demonstrated its usefulness as a means of control over the Government. It is important to the private member whether he is a member of the Government party or is in opposition to the Government. It can be used with telling effect by the Official Opposition or by smaller opposition groups. It is an efficient channel for informed criticism by specialists and former Ministers. It is the last line of defense of the private member.

- ¹Notices of Motions, 1835.
- ²Cf. supra, p. ~~31~~.
- ³Harry Graham, Mother of Parliaments (1910), p. 241.
- ⁴Josef Redlich, The Procedure of the House of Commons (1908), II, 244.
- ⁵Henry W. Lucy, A Popular Handbook of Parliamentary Procedure (1880), p. 72.
- ⁶Redlich, op. cit., II, 244.
- ⁷Lucy, op. cit., p. 72.
- ⁸Redlich, op. cit., II, 244.
- ⁹Cf. supra, pp. ~~55-58~~.
- ¹⁰Cf. supra, p. ~~55~~.
- ¹¹Cf. supra, pp. ~~56-58~~.
- ¹²Cf. infra, p. ~~234~~. The number in 1887 was 5,030.
- ¹³Cf. infra, p. ~~234~~. Between 1887 and 1901 the number of questions fluctuated between 2,900 and 6,500. The 6,534 in 1893-94 session were due in part to the long session, 226 parliamentary days.
- ¹⁴Cf. infra, pp. ~~236-237~~. There were 52 questions in the National Assembly in 1871.

¹⁵Cf. infra, p. ~~234~~ ²³⁴.

¹⁶Cf. supra, pp. ~~76-77~~. In 1903 there were 2,544 starred questions in 115 parliamentary days compared to 6,448 questions asked in the 118 days of the 1901 session. The 3,719 starred questions in the 124 days of the 1904 session were not much smaller than the 5,106 questions asked in the 124 days of the 1900 session. In 1904 in addition to the starred questions there were 2,214 unstarred questions making a total in that session of 5,933 starred and unstarred questions combined. Cf. infra, p. ~~234~~ ²³⁴.

¹⁷Cf. infra, p. ~~234~~ ²³⁴. In 1902 there were 1,774 unstarred questions in 102 parliamentary days and in 1913 there were 3,630, in 171 days.

¹⁸There were 4,120 starred questions in 114 parliamentary days in 1905 compared to 8,614 in the 156 days of 1906.

¹⁹Cf. supra, pp. ~~88-89~~ ⁸⁸⁻⁸⁹.

²⁰Cf. infra, p. ~~234~~ ²³⁴. In the 171 days of the 1908 session there were 10,181 starred questions; in 1909 there were 8,799 starred questions in 179 days; in 1910 there were 6,002 starred questions in 102 days.

²¹16,127 starred questions in 206 parliamentary days.

²²Cf. supra, pp. ~~91-92~~ ⁹¹⁻⁹².

²³Cf. infra, p. ~~235~~ ²³⁵.

²⁴There were 13,907 starred questions in 189 parliamentary days in the 1929-30 session compared to 8,259 in the 155 days of the 1931-32 session.

²⁵ There were 15,191 starred questions in the 200 parliamentary days of the 1938-39 session.

²⁶ The use of oral questions in the French Chamber of Deputies remained about the same after 1900 that it had been before then. The largest number of oral questions was forty-nine in the ordinary session of 1927, but there were several sessions during which not a single oral question was asked. Cf. infra, pp. ~~236-237~~ ²³⁶⁻²³⁷.

²⁷ The use of oral-answer questions came to an end in the Reichstag in 1922. The oral-answer question had been introduced in the Reichstag in 1912. There were 14 questions in 1915 compared to 890 in 1920 under the Weimar Constitution. The largest number of questions since the written-answer question replaced the oral-answer question in 1922 was 107 in 1925. After 1922 in the Reichstag neither the question nor the answer was printed. The answers were furnished only to the members who had signed the question (fifteen signatures were required).

²⁸ Cf. infra, pp. ~~243-245~~ ²⁴³⁻²⁴⁵. In the English House of Commons the number of unstarred questions from 1902 (the year when unstarred questions were created) through the session of 1944-45 was 112,577. There were only 1,017 unstarred questions in the 143 parliamentary days of 1932-33 compared to the 4,420 asked in the 189 days of 1929-30. The largest combined total of starred and unstarred questions was 20,523 in the 163 parliamentary days of 1919, followed closely by the 18,327 asked in 189 parliamentary days in 1929-30. In the Chamber of Deputies there were 96,646 written questions from 1909 to 1933. The yearly average was 1,085 from 1910 to 1914. There were 6,897 written questions in 1915 and 3,599 in 1931.

29 Cf. infra, p. ~~245~~²⁴⁵. Normas Currin made a study of 1,423 written questions in the French Chamber of Deputies for 1928. He reported that 579, 41.9 per cent, concerned the civil service; 310, 21.8 per cent, concerned taxes; and 179, 12.4 per cent, concerned pensions.

30 Cf. infra, pp. ~~245-247~~²⁴⁵⁻²⁴⁷.

31 Redlich, op. cit., II, 244.

32 353 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1035-1036 (November 29, 1939). Since Parliament did not meet on Mondays during the war, there were only three question periods each week.

33 Cf. infra, pp. ~~250-251~~²⁵⁰⁻²⁵¹, for tables on which these estimates are based.

34 Cf. infra, pp. ~~248-249~~²⁴⁸⁻²⁴⁹.

35 Cf. infra, p. ~~249~~²⁴⁹.

36 Cf. infra, p. ~~248~~²⁴⁸.

37 Cf. infra, pp. ~~250-251~~²⁵⁰⁻²⁵¹.

38 Cf. infra, p. ~~233~~²³³ for order of questions in force in 1930.

39 The written-answer questions in the French Chamber of Deputies were even more restricted in range of subject matter and more exclusively local and personal. Questions in the German Reichstag were almost completely without significance, since they did not get any attention at Reichstag sessions nor were they even printed. The rule was adopted in 1929 that the Government could have a question put on the agenda for

answer in the Reichstag. From then until March, 1933 (when the Reichstag ceased to function as a question-asking body) only one question (No. 51 in the Fourth Reichstag, 1928-30) was dealt with by this procedure. The author agrees with Ernst Günther Hoppe, Die kleine Anfrage im Deutschen Reichstage(1930), pp. 64, 66-67, 70, that questions cannot maintain contact with public opinion unless both questions and answers are printed.

40
Cf. infra, p. ~~247~~ ²⁴⁷.

41
Cf. infra, pp. ~~252-253~~ ²⁵²⁻²⁵³.

42
Cf. infra p. ~~252~~ ²⁵².

43
W. I. Jennings, Parliament (1940), p. 92.

44
Times (London), November 22, 1939, p. 9: November 24, 1939, p. 6.

45
My own study of the 1929-30 records produced the following results: No. of former Ministers asking questions, 30; No. of private notice questions asked 30 (34.0 per cent of total); No. of starred questions asked 1, 026 (10.9 per cent of total); No. of supplementary questions asked 1, 896 (17.0 per cent of total); Total No. of all kinds of questions asked 2, 952 (14.0 per cent of total). See Robert W. McCulloch, "Question Time in the British House of Commons," 27 American Political Science Review 974 (December, 1933). This compilation was made from Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons, Vols, 229-243 (June 25, 1929 to August 1, 1930).

46
Cf. infra, pp. ~~254-255~~ ²⁵⁴⁻²⁵⁵.

47
Ernest Brown, 230 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 627 (July 18, 1939).

48

Ordinarily questions are asked only Monday through Thursday. I have counted question days, therefore, as Monday through Thursday, excluding Friday sittings.

49

In a personal letter, Sir Horace Dawkins estimated the cost at one pound sterling for each question. Michael MacDonagh, The Pageant of Parliament (1921), I, 243, credits the Committee on National Expenditure with the report during the World War (1914-1918) that "each question costs the country thirty shillings."

50

161 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1749 (March 15, 1923).

51

Cf. infra, p. ~~257~~²⁵⁷. The motion to adjourn to discuss "a definite matter of urgent public importance" was regulated by Standing Order No. 9 from its adoption in 1882 until 1887. Its number was 17 from 1888 until 1902. It was No. 10 from 1902 until 1933, when it assumed its present number, 8.

52

304 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 2847-2848 (August 1, 1935).

53

Ibid. See in similar vein Third Report from the Select Committee on Procedure (1946), (No. 189), p. 18. The Committee said:

...In the course of time, however, it has become increasingly difficult to obtain a motion under the Standing Order, and in the period 1921 to 1939 the average number of motions allowed per session fell to $1\frac{1}{2}$.

55. This progressive decline in the availability of the procedure under Standing Order No. 8 suggested the desirability of amending the Standing Order to enable more motions to be accepted.

The 1946 Committee, however, did not recommend any relaxation of the rules, although it did suggest that refusal of motions under the rule that nothing was involved except "the ordinary administration of law" should apply only to the administration of justice in courts of law and not to ordinary administration of government departments.

54

Before 1912 the interpellation was used infrequently in the German Reichstag [see Leonid Katz, Das parlamentarische Interpellationsrecht (1913), p. 97]. Between 1912 and 1919 the interpellation could be closed with a resolution but could not involve political consequences since the Chancellor was not responsible to the Reichstag. With the development of responsible parliamentary government in Germany the number of interpellations increased, at least until 1928 (cf. infra, pp. ~~267-268~~). Many of these however were not discussed at all or only as a part of discussions of the budget of the government. Paul Marten, Die Interpellation im Reichstag (1932), pp. 42-44, felt that this latter practice undermined the effectiveness of the interpellation. He points out (ibid., p. 37) that only five interpellations were discussed separately from other interpellations or other parliamentary proceedings between 1924 and 1928; and only six from 1928 to 1930. From 1930 to 1932 not a single interpellation was discussed separately from other parliamentary business. There were twelve interpellations from 1932 up through the rise of Hitler, but not one of them was discussed. The political insignificance of the interpellation in the Reichstag is demonstrated by the fact that not a single interpellation was closed with a resolution expressing the attitude of the Reichstag between 1920 and 1933 (cf. infra, pp. ~~267-268~~). Marten, op. cit., p. 47, found 287 of interpellations from 1920 to 1928 put by opposition parties and 122 by government parties. From 1928 to 1933 (Cf. infra, p. ~~268~~)

172 were put by the opposition parties and 70 by the government parties. The Communist and Nationalist parties were the most active.

55

There was a marked increase in the use of the interpellation in the Chamber of Deputies from 1871 to 1936 (cf infra, p. ²⁵⁹ ~~258~~). Periods of numerous interpellations were World War I (1914-1918) and the depression (1930-1934). Many interpellations are never debated in the Chamber at all (cf. infra, pp. ²⁶⁰⁻²⁶¹ ~~259-260~~). From 1924 to 1928 over three hundred interpellations were considered only briefly on the question of setting the date for the debate to take place. One hundred of these were closed by formal resolution (ordre du jour). Only 133 of 844 interpellations received full debate, and 113 were closed with formal resolution after the debate. Marcel Cachin, Communist put 36 of the interpellations during this period and together with 48 other deputies put 469 of the 844 interpellations (cf. infra, pp. ²⁶²⁻²⁶³ ~~261-262~~). The Socialist and Communist groups put 401 of 844 interpellations from 1924 to 1928 (cf. infra, pp. ²⁶⁴⁻²⁶⁵ ~~263-264~~). The parties represented in the Cabinet put 263 of the 844 interpellations.

CHAPTER XI

QUESTION HOUR AND THE ADMINISTRATION*

When a Minister rises in the House of Commons to read his carefully worded reply to a question, he gives the impression of omniscience. It is the staffs of the various departments that are really on the front bench at question hour. The real relationship is often illustrated by the story, told in many different forms, of the Minister who was not familiar with the answer he was reading and read the answer and the notes appended by his staff to guide him in his reply to supplementary questions. The notes are essential, but the result is devastating when the Minister reads too much.¹ When Sir William Joynson-Hicks was Under Secretary of State for Home Affairs, the daily edition of Hansard is said to have carried a short answer, such as, "The answer is in the negative." However, he continued in this vein, "This member is becoming a nuisance; something should be done to put a curb on his activities." The slip was eliminated in the bound volume of Hansard. On another occasion a Minister read the answer to a question which had been passed over as the answer to the next question. Neither the Minister nor the member observed the mistake, and the member was apparently satisfied with the answer. This mistake was eliminated by the reporters and did not appear in Hansard.

*Based on interviews in London in 1933 and 1934.

To answer a large number of questions within twenty-four hours requires an efficient and smooth-running organization. In France the departments were allowed three weeks to get answers to written questions--oral questions were infrequently used. In Germany two weeks were allowed for answering questions. In England the departments answer from one hundred to two hundred questions each day. Most of these questions come to the notice of the department only the day previous to their being answered in the House of Commons. The dispatch with which these questions are handled has added much to the reputation of the English civil service for effectiveness and efficiency.²

The administrative procedure involved in answering a parliamentary question is similar in all departments. Every important branch of every department or agency gets the Notice Paper of the House of Commons in which notice of all starred and unstarred questions appears. In the case of starred questions and possibly also of unstarred questions the day on which the answer is expected is indicated. A clerk--sometimes called the registry clerk--in each department goes over each day's Notice Paper and calls to the attention of any branch of the department questions within the competence of that branch. In this branch of the department, the question will be referred to the clerk responsible for the subject with which the question deals. It is the clerk who will dig out the information, or have it dug out for him, and draft the answer to the question. At this first stage in the process, he also appends to the draft answer any notes which might assist in dealing with supplementary questions. This draft answer and the notes appended to it are now referred to the principal of the section in which the clerk was located. The principal may approve the draft with or without additions. He then sends it to the

assistant secretary who is responsible for the subject matter of the question. The assistant secretary has already been informed of the question by the registry clerk (or his equivalent). It is his responsibility to put the question in its final form. In a majority of cases the draft of the question which the principal approved is simply checked and sent on to the Permanent Under Secretary (or his equivalent). Unless the question should raise some important matter, he rarely does more than glance through the question to see that it is in good form. In turn, he passes the question and the supplementary notes to the Minister, or to his Parliamentary Secretary, or possibly to his private secretary. Should the question raise matters with which the Minister is not familiar or of unusual importance, he may consult the ranking officials in his department before he goes into the House to give the answer. The Minister represents his department and answers in the language of the civil service.

The Statistical Office of Customs and Excises was not responsible to Parliament in 1934. Yet in the Bill of Entry Section of the Office a clerk followed the Notice Paper each day to find what questions might require information from the Statistical Office. Since no Minister was responsible for the Office, these questions, actually, would have been directed to some department for which a Minister was responsible. When a question was discovered on the Notice Paper for which the Statistical Office had the data and information requisite for a reply, contact was established with the department to which the question was addressed to learn if it had the information requested. If the department did not have the information to answer the question, the Statistical Office prepared an answer and transmitted it by telephone or special messenger to the department responsible for the answer.

The officials who prepare the answers to questions asked in the House of Commons are generally in agreement that half or more of the questions with which they deal are useless, a waste of time and money, and a handicap to the efficiency of the service--in short a nuisance. Every official with whom I talked was equally convinced that the questions which were useful more than justified the time, trouble, and money spent on question hour. As one official put it, "Try to imagine the House of Commons without question hour." Another, in this case a private secretary to a member of the Government, thought the removal of question hour would not bring immediate detriment to the civil service, but he was convinced that in the long run the absence of question hour would be undesirable and would undermine the honesty, efficiency, and effectiveness of the service. He said that question hour kept the administration on their toes. It was the opinion of civil servants themselves that those employed in the public service were naturally cautious, honest, and careful and that they were no more careful in dealing with questions than with other matters for which their department was responsible.

The feeling that question hour keeps the civil servant "up to the mark" was voiced in the select committee investigating procedure in 1931. Douglas Hacking, member of the committee, directing his question to Stanley Baldwin, said, "That hour is dreaded more than any other by the Civil Servants, and it keeps them up to the mark much better than any other way which anybody could suggest?" Baldwin replied, "It is a very expensive hour. There is no more unalienable right, and it is regarded as such by the private Members of the House of Commons, than that right of putting questions to Ministers."³ Ramsay Muir says that questions

"probably have the effect of increasing the red-tape of the Departments, since, being liable to be fired at on every kind of minute point, officials are bound to feel their chief safeguard is rigid punctilio in sticking to the rules."⁴ Lowell thought that question hour made its greatest contribution by preventing the growth of the bureaucratic spirit.⁵

One serious drawback to question hour is the pressure which it puts at critical points in the administrative machinery. During the Boer war, it was the War Office which felt the constant pressure from question hour. It might be some seemingly insignificant inquiry by a Member of Parliament which would jam the channels of communication.⁶ Perhaps the Foreign Office in recent years has been most plagued by questions at times when it needed its full facilities to deal with difficult questions of diplomacy. The members sense that something big is on foot and put a series of questions which upset the routine of the department and take the valuable time of ranking departmental officials. This prevents them from giving full time and attention to the delicate negotiations about which questions have been asked. Questions have right of way and other matters must be sidetracked to make way for the questions of curious Members of Parliament. During the tenure of Arthur Henderson as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the Foreign Office was flooded with questions about Russia and relations with Russia. This took the time of the Secretary, Under Secretary, and ranking permanent officials on Monday and Wednesday mornings, and often on Tuesday nights as well--the Foreign Office stands second on the question list on Monday and first on Wednesday.⁷ The pressure was put on the Embassy staff in Moscow as well as on the Foreign Office in London. The Embassy staff in Moscow was kept busy hours on end digging up answers for curious Members of Parliament. In other departments the burden is lighter because there is not the necessity for careful consultation before answering questions, and also because there are fewer ques-

tions to many other departments. One official in London made the suggestion to me that each department which was popular at question hour should have a permanent staff member available for consultation with the Minister--thus releasing the time and energy of the ranking permanent officials for important administrative matters.

One permanent official suggested to me that the details of service--particularly in departments like the Post Office--should be considered outside the scope of question hour, as are details of service connected with the British Broadcasting Corporation.⁸ It was his belief that this would result in the saving of time and money. He estimated that nine of the twenty questions put to the Post Office from December 4 to December 20, 1933 were purely local and personal matters. He thought these should be dealt with by other less expensive and less formal methods. This would mean the removal of details from the responsibility of both Minister and Parliament. The Minister would then be responsible only for general policy, and for the efficient conduct of his department, and Parliament would in turn be concerned with these two but not with the day-to-day details of the service rendered. It was argued that this would save the time of Parliament and of the department. Aside from the difficulty of distinguishing between detail and principle there is a real danger in this proposal. I am inclined to agree with Harold Laski that, "The real danger that confronts the official is his constant liability to be separated from...lay opinion."⁹ If matters of routine administration are removed from the responsibility of the Minister and of Parliament, and are excluded from the scope of question hour, the effectiveness of this device in maintaining this contact

with "lay opinion" is undermined. At least one official in London would agree with this point of view. He thought that even questions on private and personal matters served a useful purpose, and that most questions were reasonable. It was his opinion that since often matters of seeming little moment involved principles of the greatest importance, it should be left to the discretion of the individual Member of Parliament whether to deal with a question by correspondence, by written-answer question, or by oral-answer question at question hour. (Certainly the private member has little enough left to justify his existence.) He said that most officials welcomed questions, even with their disagreeable consequences, as an indication of the state of public feeling. Although questions consume time and money, and are often a nuisance, they make possible the control of the vast and complicated administrative machinery of modern government. Frank C. B. Elliott, who spent most of his official life with the Metropolitan Police, thinks questions are desirable as a means of avoiding injustice and abuse of the liberty of the subject and as a bulwark against tyranny, caprice, and injustice.

10

In England, a Parliament which is supreme according to accepted constitutional theory has lost its real power to a Government which acts in its name. The real function of legislation and the supervision of administration are vested in the Government. To the Members of Parliament falls the function of control of Government and permanent administration. This function boils down to ventilation of grievance, extraction of information, and criticism of the administrative process.

11

As we have already suggested, questions are the most satisfactory means of day-to-day control in the

hands of the private member. He may also find it convenient to resort to direct correspondence, and, infrequently, interviews, but the question is the heart of Parliamentary control in England.

Sir Henry Bunbury suggested to me in 1934 that there were four basic types of questions: (1) Those seeking publicity for the member asking them, (2) Political questions--those seeking to embarrass the Government, (3) Those arising out of a genuine desire for information, (4) Friendly questions--often put at the suggestion of the Minister, and sometimes drafted by his staff.

It is apparent that the questions of many of those members who conceive their whole Parliamentary duty as being to put their three questions each question day would fall in the first category. Harry Day, and J. M. Kenworthy are illustrations of members who put their full quota of questions in the late thirties. Gibson Bowles and "weary" Weir are members of an earlier day who used question hour regularly. We might call this the champion questioners club. At least their constituents know they have been at London.

The usefulness of question hour for getting official information was demonstrated in the early thirties by a Labour question. Dr. Herman Finer, then of the London School of Economics and Political Science, was working on a revision of local government for the Labour Party. Since he needed information about the duties of local authorities under the supervision of the Ministry of Health, a question by a Labour Member of Parliament provided the information which contributed to the plans of the Labour Party for the reform of local government.

Many questions put by Government backbenchers fall into the fourth category--they are friendly questions. This is a convenient way to make a statement about the activities of a department. Likewise it is a useful means of securing publicity for the department. The press coverage of question hour makes it an ideal time to make statements with the most telling effect. It prevents them from being buried in the mass of detail of a debate, and it also lends them more color than a mere announcement by the department concerned. In this respect, question hour serves adequately a function similar to the Presidential and departmental press conferences in the United States.

The political question, our second category, is the most colorful of all types. A considerable amount of organization lies behind these questions. A party organization usually inspires and directs the use of question hour as a political weapon. The member best suited to asking the question is selected. Members most effective for putting supplementary questions are contacted. When used in this way, the question becomes a weapon of parliamentary opposition of real power. In 1937 the weakness of the Labour Party in using question hour for political opposition was pointed out by Emanuel Shinwell. He proposed that:

There should be some kind of a central bureau for the examination of questions to make certain that members in their enthusiasm do not blanket each other. It is suggested that Labour members before they put questions on the Order Paper should hand them in to the central bureau in order to prevent overlapping and to ensure that every afternoon Ministers are subjected to a well-organized barrage.¹²

The use of questions under the Labour Government by the Conservative Opposition from 1929 to 1931 suggested that there must have been some thought and organization put into these questions. To avoid asking questions which had already been asked was in itself no mean task, when it is remembered that there were 543 starred questions put on Russia alone in the 1929-30 session of Parliament.¹³

The uses to which questions are put are varied, but at least two other general purposes beyond the four categories suggested to the author by Sir Henry Bunbury should be noticed. We have already suggested in the previous chapter that Labour Party backbenchers use question hour to put pressure on their own front bench.¹⁴ Oddly enough the other use to which question hour has been put is to educate Ministers about the departments of which they are nominal heads. Douglas Hacking suggested to Stanley Baldwin in 1931 in the procedure committee that question hour might "be the means of calling the attention of the Minister to something going on in his Department, about which he may not have known anything?" Baldwin replied to this question, "I think it [question hour] is a very valuable thing."¹⁵ This procedure would be useful both for those who objected to the activities of the department and to members of the staff who wished to attract the sympathetic interest of their Minister to what they were doing. Thus question hour may be used to make the Minister aware of the department which he is supposed to control. This offers a fertile field for the private member bent on serving some useful purpose. In making use of question hour, Members of Parliament can be expected to ask about "safe" matters and seldom take advantage of the real weaknesses of the

department. It would be agreed by most administrators that the best questions are seldom asked, for the private member usually misses the best opportunities to make a telling blow with questions.

Many questions are unimportant in themselves, but a few are of infinite importance. Everyone recognizes that the right to ask questions is important. Parliament exercises its role as "the grand inquest of the nation" as Lowell would say, through the effective use of question hour. The machinery is often abused, is often not devoted to worthy ends, but it is the only effective regular procedure by which Parliament may exercise its most important function of control.

1

F. A. Ogg, English Government and Politics (1936), p. 454, quotes M. Cary et al., The Development of the Civil Service, p. 229. He reports the following as having taken place during the World War (1914-1918). The Minister in answering a question said: "The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative; the remaining parts, therefore, do not arise." Here he should have stopped but he is reported to have continued, "This member is being very tiresome-- to give him any information only whets his appetite for more."

2

Unstarred questions are not answered with such speed, but may frequently take several days or even two weeks.

3

Parliamentary Papers, 1930-31, VIII (No. 161), Minutes of Evidence, p. 37 (question 306).

4

How Britain is Governed (1930), p. 81.

5

A. Lawrence Lowell, The Government of England (1926), I, 189-190.

6

Henry W. Lucy, The Balfourian Parliament, 1900-1905 (1906), p. 153, reports a question by John Dillon (so he thought) asking for the proportion of Roman Catholic chaplains to Catholic soldiers in the field, a question which resulted in a request for a return from a beleaguered garrison of "the number of Roman Catholic soldiers in the South Lancashire Regiment."

7

Cf. infra, p. 233 .

8

Cf. supra, p. 132 .

9
Harold J. Laski, Parliamentary Government in England (London, 1938),
p. 346, says:

Civil Servants, like other human beings, do in fact
make mistakes, even grave ones; and the best method of con-
vincing the public of their bona fides is the fullest open-
ness about their habits....

And this leads me to the insistence that just as the
maximum publicity is desirable for what may be termed offi-
cial thought, so is the maximum relation between civil service
and public desirable wherever the exercise of a discretionary
power, especially one that is secret in its nature, is en-
trusted to a department....

The real danger that confronts the official is his
constant liability to be separated from...lay opinion.

10
"Questions in Parliament," 135 Fortnightly Review 341-348
(March, 1934).

11
Laski, op. cit., pp. 165-167.

12
Times (London), June 23, 1937, p. 18.

13
Cf. infra, p. 247.

14
Cf. supra, pp. 156-158.

15
Parliamentary Papers, 1930-31, VIII (No. 161), Minutes of Evidence,
p. 37 (question 308).

CHAPTER XII

LEGISLATIVE CONTROL IN THE U. S.

In the United States the state and national legislative bodies are not organized for legislative control. The common idea of them as lawmaking bodies is revealed in the very name by which we call them-- legislatures.¹ Indeed there is much criticism when Congress concerns itself with an examination of how the agencies of government are functioning. Let Congress stick to its last. It should make laws. Let it be admitted that there is greater opportunity for legislative bodies to share in the lawmaking process in the United States than there is in the parliamentary system. Opportunity alone has not been enough to preserve control of the legislative function for the so-called legislature. The administrative reorganization movement, the executive budget, and the rapid increase in executive power have modified our governmental practice in the direction of the parliamentary system without modifying the theoretical distinction between the parliamentary system and our own.

The LaFollette-Monroney joint committee of the United States Senate and House of Representatives recognized that "The formulation of legislation is no longer exclusively a congressional function." Half the bills "originate in the Federal departments and bureaus and are later revised in committee to accord with congressional views." This committee was convinced that "Congress was still responsible for sifting, testing,

and debating all legislative proposals wherever they come from and for determining the final shape of public policy." Much of the reform which they proposed was designed to have "Congress play a larger part in preparing legislation and determining national policy," rather than² with providing for effective legislative control over the government.

Because the President of the United States is usually a dominant political figure, and because of his constitutional share in legislation, he has evolved into a Prime Minister or "chief legislator."³ The President is in a strong position as compared to Congress. Some say our system is out of balance.⁴ Roland Young says, "Almost all important legislative policy is sponsored by the President." He also thinks that a Congressman needs the sponsorship of the President to get a bill passed into law.⁵ On the other hand, Congress does not have adequate means of control since its procedure is designed to assist it in the lawmaking process. "American lawmaking bodies lack adequate methods for getting information from the executive branch."⁶ The investigating committee is the main method of procedure available for the exercise of legislative control. It is particularly useful because it is not under control of the executive branch of government.⁷ The shortcomings of the Dies Committee on Un-American Activities and its successors have reduced the usefulness of this form of procedure.

The tremendous expansion of the Federal Government during the recent war as well as during the New Deal has stimulated criticism of our government and evoked suggestions for improvement. Proposals vary from

fundamental reforms such as the cabinet type government proposed by Henry Hazlitt⁸ to limited reforms such as the reduction in the number of standing committees and the increase of Congressional salaries. Considerable attention has been given recently to the relations of Congress to the administrative agencies and departments.⁹ Improvement in these relations might be accomplished in several ways. More intimate contact between Congressional committees and administrative agencies may be the answer.¹⁰ The responsibility would rest on committees and particularly on subcommittees of the appropriations committee to keep currently in touch with the operation of particular administrative agencies. These "administrative hearings" might be distinguished from the legislative hearings traditionally associated with the legislative process. Another recommendation is that informal contacts between Congressmen and administrators should be arranged.¹¹ Informal meetings of this nature took place during the recent war--much of the information released was off the record. The creation of a council representing the majority party leaders in Congress to provide formal contact with the President has also been suggested.¹² Responsibility for legislative leadership would be placed on this group.

One proposal for closer legislative and executive relations which has received some support is the creation of some form of question hour or interpellation similar to the English question hour or the French interpellation.¹³ The plan proposed by Estes Kefauver attempts to avoid any conflict with the system of standing committees by making them responsible for receiving questions and notifying the departments concerned.¹⁴ The committee would also be responsible for getting the

consent of the Committee on Rules to allot time for the question session. Each session would be controlled by one committee and there would be at most one such question session each week. His plan has met with considerable approval.¹⁵ Yet, it seems unlikely it will be adopted.¹⁶

Congressman Kefauver maintained the plan would help administrators understand the Congressional point of view and on the other hand would also enable administrators to explain their problems and difficulties and justify their policies.¹⁷ Congress would benefit by having its importance established in the "public mind" through greater attention from press and radio. He thought administrators would be more responsible and more careful in making decisions "if they knew they would be called upon to give an account of what they were doing before the House."¹⁸

It would save time for administrators by avoiding duplicate appearances before several committees.¹⁹ He summed up the advantages of his plan by saying, "I believe that the question period would inform and reinvigorate both the legislative and administrative processes. It would quicken the pace of government without disturbing the balance between the two branches."²⁰

The Kefauver plan is a far cry from English question hour. It provides only limited opportunity for questioning the policies of the government since it occurs once every two weeks or at oftenest every week. English question hour puts the government departments on the spot four times each week thus providing much greater public interest. The Kefauver plan permits only one department or agency to be questioned at a meeting thus limiting the range of subjects which can be covered. Because the oral questions at the end of the questioning period would be controlled by the majority and minority parties there would not be the dynamic and

dramatic spontaneity which characterizes the supplementary questions asked in England. Notice of questions under the Kefauver plan would be given to the appropriate standing committee. Congressmen would not find it a very valuable means of exerting control--that is of securing information from government agencies and bringing criticism to bear on them. Such a question period would never play the vital role which question hour does in England.

The Kefauver plan is not an interpellation in the French tradition. The interpellation involves debate. Under it the individual member has a weapon to use against the government. Most important of all, there is no chance that the President or any official would resign because of the revelations made at a question period in Congress since the executive is not responsible to Congress, in the political sense that a French Ministry is responsible to the French parliament. The Kefauver plan is somewhat similar to the oral question which was infrequently used in the Chamber of Deputies of the Third Republic.

The limitations of the Kefauver plan do not necessarily condemn it as undesirable. It may be a step in the right direction. Certainly it would be an improvement over the ex parte statements which are sometimes read into the records of Congress. Young thinks the publication of a letter to an administrator and his reply provide a direct method of criticism open to all Congressmen. This is superior, he says, to the "rambling Congressional criticism where the facts are but partially known and the administrator's attitude is unrevealed."²¹ In matters of some moment, a session of the House, or better yet a joint session of the two Houses of Congress, would offer an opportunity for

a more fair and effective exposition of the facts and problems concerned than would be offered by exchange of letters. If the Kefauver plan had been in effect during the recent war it would have provided a means of getting a fairer and more satisfactory consideration of the OPA. It would have helped the officials in the OPA keep in touch with public opinion. It should also have helped Congressmen understand the problems OPA had to solve. To be specific, the complaints about ceiling prices on cotton publicized in the Senate on January 17, 1946 would have been more valuable if Chester Bowles had been on the floor of the Senate to reply in person to the charges made. Only Maybank's telegram and Bowles' letter were available to guide the discussion of the Senate. One serious aspect of our practice today is revealed in the fate of OPA. It became a whipping boy for Senators who had no fear of the agency having an opportunity to defend itself.

One who proposes a question hour for the U. S. meets the objection that the institution is foreign to our system of government. It is said to be incompatible with the doctrine of separation of powers. This argument overlooks two very important considerations. Our government is in fact a venture in co-operation between Congress and President. Question hour does not imply the right of Congress to dismiss the President or any agency head. In England where Parliament is legally competent to bring about the dismissal of a Government or a Minister, question hour offers opportunity to get information or to bring activities of government agencies to light, or to subject administrative actions to searching criticism. It does not offer a means for overthrowing the Government or bringing about the resignation of a Minister. This is accomplished by the voters at a general election, not by Parliament at question hour or

even in debate. Political stability is as much characteristic of English parliamentary government as it is of our own government. English experience is not foreign to our problems.

An useful precedent was set by Cordell Hull in appearing before a joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate on November 18, 1943 just after his return from the Moscow Conference. He reported on the Conference.²³ Two resolutions were presented inviting Secretary Hull to appear before Congress but the resolutions were never reported out of committee.²⁴ His appearance was arranged informally through party channels. The announcement that he would speak was made by Representative McCormack on November 16.²⁵ The House of Representatives recessed during Hull's speech. Its appearance in the Congressional Record was arranged by the Speaker. This incident suggests an effective means of getting formal statements of policy from administrative officials.

The Kefauver plan would go further than a speech by the administrative official and would open up the possibility of questions from the majority and minority parties. This might result in duplication if both the House and Senate requested the presence of the same official. Congressman Kefauver thought the Senate would set up a question period if the House did. Should this happen, he anticipated a joint session once a week to hear a report from some department head and to direct questions to him.²⁶

While the President and administrative officials do not report to Congress and do not make themselves available for questions by Congressmen, they do submit to press conferences which confer the privilege of questioning upon reporters. Young says the information revealed at press

conferences is more significant than that brought out at committee hearings. He thinks these press conferences "serve many of the functions performed in other countries by appearance of the Prime Minister or Premier on the floor of the legislature to state the government's policy and to be questioned concerning it." He says it is "one of the anomalies of our system" that reporters can publicly question a President while Congressmen cannot.²⁷ It is also true that a statement in the press has more publicity value to a Congressman than a statement in Congress. This gives the press the power to direct and inspire Congressional criticism.²⁸

The state legislatures in the United States have followed a pattern of organization similar to that followed by Congress. In Wisconsin, however, precedent has been broken by permitting interpellation in the legislature. The procedure may be initiated by petition of six members of the senate or by seventeen members of the assembly--not more than four and nine respectively may be members of the same political party. The petition should be filed with the presiding officer of the house to which the members belong.²⁹ Joint session for the purposes of an interpellation is provided with the support of the same number of members of each house as required for interpellation in that house. This petition should be filed with the presiding officer of the senate.³⁰ The time for the interpellation is supposed to be set within twenty days by the presiding officer concerned. The official to be questioned should be given notice that he is to be interpellated and should be informed of the questions to be put to him.³¹ Oral questions are also permitted.³² The legislature is empowered to adopt rules governing interpellations.³³ It has become customary for a joint resolution to be adopted for the purpose of arranging an interpellation, as well as to have

the required petition filed. Questions and answers should be recorded and the Governor should be furnished a copy within thirty days after the close of the examination under the interpellation.³⁴

This Wisconsin interpellation was suggested by Dr. Charles McCarthy in 1914.³⁵ He thought state commissions might be controlled by a procedure like question hour in England. It was his proposal that commissions might be removed by the legislature. William M. Bray initiated the proposal of an interpellation which was applied to the state conservation commission only by Chapter 406 of the Wisconsin Statutes of 1915.³⁶ In 1917 Chapter 634 of the Wisconsin Statutes included all appointive state officers under the interpellation. In 1921 legislation was adopted to permit the removal of appointive officers by joint resolution, after their examination by interpellation, but apparently this power has not been used.³⁷

The interpellation has not been widely use in Wisconsin. There was an interpellation of the chairman of the industrial commission in 1919.³⁸ The railroad commissioners were called on to appear at an interpellation by petition in the assembly in 1921, but no action was over taken on the petition.³⁹ In 1935 the members of the board of control were called up for interpellation by two joint resolutions. In 1941 the procedure was applied to the conservation commission.⁴⁰ Potentially at least the Wisconsin legislature is in a more favorable position than the legislatures of other states. The Wisconsin Blue Book states the powers of the legislature in a broad way, as follows:

The legislature controls the purse strings and the organization of nearly all administrative departments. Its fundamental function is law making, but through its control of appropriations and its right to investigate any state department it can to a very large extent control the actions of all branches of government.⁴¹

In the United States our legislative bodies have not adopted the devices of English and French parliaments for control. Our legislatures still organize their procedure around the introduction of bills and the passing of laws. The investigating committee is one procedure widely used in the United States which aids legislative bodies in the exercise of control. The Kefauver plan for a weekly or fortnightly questioning of one administrative official has not been supported in official quarters and would not be as effective a means of control as question hour in England. The press conference remains the medium through which information about government action is extracted. The one example of interpellation in the United States is in Wisconsin, but it has not been frequently used in the thirty years of its existence. There is need for more effective machinery for legislative control in the United States.

1

John A. Perkins, "A Connecticut Yankee Looks at Congress," 50 Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review 195 (May 6, 1944), says, "It is part of our governmental folklore that Congress writes our laws." He quotes Robert Luce to the effect that almost no important bill gets to be law without administrative initiative or previous approval of the President.

2

U. S. Senate, 79th Congress, Second Session, Report No. 1011, p. 11. Roland Young, This is Congress (1943), p. vii, says, "Congress is now a revisionary body which influences but which does not itself make public policy. In considering legislation, Congress has what amounts to an item veto over presidential and bureaucratic proposals, and in some instances this revisionary power is used very extensively."

3

Perkins, loc. cit.

4

Hearings of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, 79th Congress, First Session, p. 121, testimony of Senator Fulbright; pp. 615-616, testimony of Arthur N. Holcombe. Pendleton Herring, "Executive-Legislative Responsibilities," 38 American Political Science Review 1163-1164 (December, 1944), warns against the danger of weakening the position of the President.

5

Young, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

6

Robert Luce, Legislative Problems (1935), p. 306. Young, op. cit., pp. 193-195, says that control in our Congress takes "the form of Congressional hearings, Congressional debates, letters to departments, requests for special information, or inquiry by the press." He also

calls attention to the one-minute speeches at the beginning of the House meeting each day. He discounts impeachment as a means of control, p. 184; likewise, p. 198, he finds annual reports of little aid to control by Congress. "The most important continual check which Congress has over the administration," he thinks, p. 225, are the hearings of the House Committee on Appropriations. Perkins, loc. cit., finds Congressional control inadequate.

7
Young, op. cit., pp. 193-199, finds this "the most spectacular form of Congressional control." He thinks it is used to "Blackwash" individuals unfairly. It is useful, but he believes its effectiveness can be lost by a propensity for investigating everything and by a feeling that a witness does not get a square deal.

8
Henry Hazlitt, A New Constitution Now (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1942).

9
Congressman Voorhis of California, 89 Congressional Record 9459; Report of the Committee on Congress of the American Political Science Association (1945), pp. 78-81; reprinted in Hearings of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, 79th Congress, First Session, p. 832; Young, op. cit., pp. 239-243.

10
John B. Blandford, Jr., Hearings of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, 79th Congress, First Session, pp. 513-516, 518; Arthur N. Holcombe, ibid., pp. 623-624, suggested that the standing committees of the House and Senate function as joint committees; Chester Bowles, ibid., pp. 634-635; George B. Galloway, ibid., pp. 832-833, had the recommendations of the Committee on Congress of the American Political Science Association inserted in the Hearings.

11

William A Jump, Hearings of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, 79th Congress, First Session, p. 687.

12

Young, op. cit., p. 255; Report of the Committee on Congress of the American Political Science Association (1945), pp. 78-81; Robert Heller, "Strengthening the Congress," National Planning Association Planning Pamphlet No. 39, pp. 13-17.

13

Young, op. cit., pp. 52, 258-259; Heller, op. cit., pp. 27-28, proposed that questions should be directed to the President and assigned to the proper agency by him; Chester Bowles, Hearings of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, 79th Congress, First Session, pp. 730-731; David Cushman Coyle, ibid., pp. 791-792, 797.

14

House Resolution 327, 78th Congress, First Session; 89 Congressional Record 9458 (November 12, 1943).

15

Perkins, op. cit., p. 197; Senator Fulbright, Hearings of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, 79th Congress, First Session, pp. 123-124; Estes Kefauver himself, ibid., p. 81, reported that only one or two editorials of three hundred and fifty daily papers opposed the plan.

16

John A. Perkins, "Congressional Self-Improvement," 38 American Political Science Review 504 (June, 1944).

17

Estes Kefauver, "The Need for Better Executive-Legislative Teamwork in the National Government," 38 American Political Science Review 322 (April, 1944).

18

89 Congressional Record 9463.

19

Estes Kefauver, Statement before the Rules Committee in Support of House Resolution 327 [1943], p. 14, said that Mr. Jeffers appeared before five different committees in one week. He indicated that Mr. Nelson and Mr. McNutt appeared "before several House committees and gave substantially the same testimony during one week."

20

Estes Kefauver, "The Need for Better Executive-Legislative Teamwork in the National Government," 38 American Political Science Review 325.

21

Young, op. cit., p. 195.

22

92 Congressional Record (No. 4, pp. 69-71), January 17, 1946.

23

89 ibid. 9677-9679 (November 18, 1943).

24

Ibid., 9414, 9432.

25

Ibid., 9587.

26

Estes Kefauver, Hearings of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, 79th Congress, First Session, p. 82, thought it would be desirable to have these weekly question periods in Congress broadcast over the radio. It is interesting to observe that joint sessions of house and senate are provided by the rules for interpellations in Wisconsin. See infra.

27

Young, op. cit., pp. 196-197.

28

Ibid., p. 197.

29

Wisconsin Statutes, 1943, pp. 174-175, section 13.23 "Interpellation of officers." See also Assembly Manual, 1943 p. 272.

30

Wisconsin Assembly Manual, 1943, p. 273.

31

Ibid. See also Wisconsin Statutes, 1943, p. 175, section 13.24.

32

Wisconsin Statutes, 1943, p. 175.

33

Ibid. See also Assembly Manual, 1943, p. 274.

34

Ibid.

35

WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY, Interpellation of State Officers in Wisconsin (1946), p. 1. McCarthy proposed that commissions should be subject to a vote of confidence or lack of confidence following the interpellation.

36

Ibid., pp. 1-2.

37

Ibid., p. 4.

38

Ibid., pp 2-3.

39

The questions concerned the Milwaukee Gas Company.

40

WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY, Interpellation of State Officers in Wisconsin (1946), p. 4.

41

Wisconsin Blue Book, 1935, p. 142.

CHAPTER XIII

EVALUATION

The role of the private member of the House of Commons has been reduced almost to the vanishing point. This is the consequence of the almost dictatorial position of the Cabinet in the British Parliament. Parliament has become a law-ratifying body rather than a law-making body. Financial powers have deteriorated into form rather than substance. The strict party discipline and Cabinet dictatorship have reduced a Parliament which is omnipotent in theory to a formal role of ratification, while the real decisions in law and finance are made outside Parliament. The financial and law-making machinery has survived as one means by which Government policy may be subjected to searching criticism. Because their sole purpose is control, questions have proved more flexible and more useful than either financial or law-ratifying procedures as means for the control of the Cabinet and administration by Parliament.

The effectiveness of question hour in 1885, for example, was pointed out by Henry W. Lucy.

"Question hour" has come to be one of the most important sections of a night's sitting. Within the brief space of time there is frequently compressed a series of speeches dealing with the most pressing topics of the day. Whatever may be the condition of the House at subsequent stages of the sitting, it is always crowded at question time. A Minister has then a full and unwearied audience, and the temptation to oratorical display, or to demonstration of superior ability, is very strong. Lord Beaconsfield. . . used to pull himself up for a supreme effort when

called upon to answer a question, however simple.¹

Sidney Low testified to the importance of questions in 1904.

This method of extracting information on the actions of the Executive, is in practice considerably circumscribed. Nevertheless the shower of questions, "starred" and "un-starred," descends upon the heads of the ministers, day after day, during the session. Not the least onerous part of their duties is that of fending off the persistent inquisitor, without either committing themselves and their departments, or seeming to shirk investigation. The knowledge that any pertinacious opponent may, at any moment, summon a member of the Government to the witness-box is a certain drag upon the Cabinet autocracy, since it prevents ministers from sitting and working in the dark, and compels them to keep an anxious eye on the public and the press.²

Harry Graham writing in 1910 was less convinced of the value of question hour. He thought members had their secretaries "make out a weekly list of conundrums" to put to members of the Government "with no other purpose than that of showing their constituents that they" were "active" in Parliament. He quoted with approval the Edinburgh Review of 1854, which said, "It would seem to be the chief amusement of some members diligently to read the newspapers in the morning, and to ask Ministers of State in the afternoon if they have read them too, and what they think of them."³

In 1922 Stephen Leacock gave a humorous but none too flattering estimate of question hour:

Looking around to find just where the natural service of the House of Commons comes in, I am inclined to think that it must be the practice of "asking questions" in the House. Whenever anything goes wrong a member rises and asks a question.... When this is done all England falls flat upon its face.⁴

Geoffrey Crowther, editor of the Economist, London, was impressed with the contribution of question hour during the war (1939-1945). He said of question hour:

This is a very severe test of the democratic sincerity of any man in public office. It has proved a very effective check upon actions of the government in the execution of its enormous powers. On many occasions since the war began the government has been compelled to withdraw from the position it has already occupied because of the barrage of unanswerable questions slung at it in the House of Commons. This has happened to proposals for the setting up of emergency courts; it has happened to the government's policy in regard to treatment of aliens, to its air-raids shelter policy and in a host of other matters.⁵

Quite in contrast to this opinion of question hour is a German author's opinion published in 1930 that ninety percent of the questions asked in the House of Commons were unnecessary and could be dealt with otherwise.⁶ One can find considerable evidence of the petty and trivial. No one would lose sleep over Mr. McCreagh's weeds at Barton Stacey.⁷ It scarcely seems appropriate to take the time of busy men to publicize the postal service between the Western

Postal District of London and High Street, Guilford in Surrey.⁸ There is horseplay. When Major Harvey asked if the eggs used in the House of Commons' kitchens were produced at home, he received a simple reply of "Yes" from the kitchen committee, but Ernest Winterton took the occasion to ask, "Is there any possibility of the Liberal party requiring eggs in view of an early General Election?"⁹ A question about the coffee served gave Viscountess Astor the opportunity to ask if any one on the kitchen committee knew how to make good coffee.¹⁰

These petty questions do not monopolize the time at question hour. The Government must be on its toes. For example, Walter Bagehot asserted that the fall of Palmerston's first Government was partly accomplished at question hour. Darby Griffith was given the credit for the fall of Palmerston's Government. Bagehot said, "The cheerful impertinence with which in the conceit of victory that minister answered grave men much hurt his Parliamentary power."¹¹ The actual defeat of the Government could not take place at question hour. What accomplished Palmerston's fall was the unfavorable reaction to the introduction of the Conspiracy to Murder Bill after the attempt on the life of Napoleon III. The impression that Palmerston was introducing the bill because of demands of the French Government did not sit well in England.¹² When Griffith asked what Palmerston proposed to do about publications in the French Moniteur critical of England and the English government, the Prime Minister complained of the difficulty which questions in the House of Commons caused in relations with France. Then the Prime Minister gave his answer to Griffith's question:

Now, Sir, with regard to the question of the hon. Member I can only say, that it is not the intention of Her Majesty's Government to adopt a course of proceeding such as that which he has suggested [Griffith had proposed that the French Ambassador's letter of regret be published in the Moniteur, where some addresses critical of England had been published], because we think that such a course would be highly improper, and If I may be permitted to say so, without meaning anything personally offensive to the hon. Gentleman, excessively absurd. ¹³

The Palmerston Government fell when Milner Gibson's amendment to the Conspiracy to Murder Bill was carried against the Government by a vote of 234 to 215. ¹⁴

Rarely does question hour have such a close relationship to the fall of a Government, since modern practice reserves such drama for the general election. However, there is evidence that Government policy can be changed at question hour. In 1878, W. E. Forster, William Gladstone, John Bright, and Sir Charles W. Dilke used question hour and debates on the motion to adjourn to impress the Government with the desire of the English people to avoid becoming embroiled in the war in progress between Turkey and Russia. ¹⁵ The Boer War in 1901 and 1902 was brought home to the English at question hour. Here was revealed the high mortality in concentration camps in South Africa. Here it was announced that Miss Hobhouse, who had been investigating these high mortality rates, had been deported from South Africa. ¹⁶ It was revealed that the wife of a Boer General was confined in the camp at Maritzburg. ¹⁷ On the same day the Government announced a drop.

in the mortality rate in concentrations camps--probably in answer to a friendly question arranged for that purpose.¹⁸

In the years preceding 1906, the employees of the Post Office campaigned for recognition of their staff organizations by frequent questions in the House of Commons. Stuart Bunning, who was a Post Office employee at the time, was in charge of drafting the questions put in the House of Commons. The recognition of employees' right of organization in 1906 and the organization of the Whitley Councils in 1919 reduced the use of question hour by government servants to put pressure on the Cabinet and upper staff.

One might hesitate to give much credit to question hour for the relaxation of the Coal Emergency Directions in 1926,¹⁹ but there is no doubt about the vital role it played in the Savidge case in 1928.²⁰ Mr. Johnston asked a private notice question about the use of third degree methods on Miss Savidge by Scotland Yard. Sir W. Joynson-Hicks, Home Secretary, refused to give assurances that the investigation desired by some members would be made.²¹ A debate on the urgency motion for adjournment followed and a number of other important results as well.²² In 1930, as the result of pressure through questions and the press, the First Commissioner of Works took steps to preserve Hadrian's Wall from destruction by quarrying operations. He secured power to act through the Ancient Monuments Bill.²³ The water supply problem was kept in the public eye by questions. As a result of the agitation about water supply and water pollution a large grant was forthcoming for the development of more adequate water supplies.

Winston Churchill used a friendly question put by Colonel Wedgwood to anticipate a motion of censure against the coalition Cabinet which was to have been moved by Sir W. Joynson-Hicks. The motion really failed before it was ever put.²⁴

Oscar M. Hartzell was convicted in Federal District Court in Sioux City, Iowa in 1934 for having collected from 10,000 gullible Americans a sum of \$700,000 to \$1,300,000. He promised \$1,000 for every dollar invested.²⁵ His alleged purpose in spending thirteen years in England was to collect for these American friends a share in the fictitious twenty-two billion dollar estate of Sir Francis Drake. This was the approximate value of thirteen acres of land in the heart of London which had at one time belonged to Drake. Our Consulate General in London had enough evidence by 1933 to secure a deportation order from the English Home Office. Hartzell was arrested when he arrived in New York. This made it unnecessary to ask for his extradition. Nathaniel P. Davis, the official in the Consulate General who was in charge of the Hartzell case, wrote to Sir Harry Britain asking him to arrange a question in the House of Commons about the Hartzell case.²⁶ Sir Arthur Shirley Benn, at the request of Sir Harry Britain, asked the question, which was answered by the Home Secretary. Hansard reported:

14. Sir A. Shirley Benn asked the Home Secretary the grounds for the deportation order made against Oscar M. Hartzell an American Subject; and what has been the result of his inquiries into Mr. Hartzell's claim to unsettled or unappropriated estate of Sir Francis Drake or his family?

Sir. J. Gilmour: I decided in February last, on the advice of the Aliens Deportation Advisory Committee, to make a Deportation Order against Oscar Hartzell, on the ground that,

as he had no genuine occupation and was holding himself out as carrying on a scheme for the recovery of the so-called Drake estate alleged to be dormant in Chancery, it was not conducive to the public good that he should be allowed to remain in this country. So far as His Majesty's Government is aware, there is no unsettled or unappropriated estate in existence which formerly belonged to Sir Francis Drake or to any member of his family.²⁷

This question and answer were read in the newspapers by T. W. Barnard, a private investigator. He wrote to Sir Shirley Benn who turned the letter over to Mr. Davis.²⁸ He revealed that Hartzell had admitted to him that the Drake estate was a figment of the imagination. Barnard was investigating for a woman client who was interested in Hartzell. The private detective was a prosecution witness at the trial at Sioux City. The prosecution was puzzled as to how it would get the above question and answer into the court records at Sioux City, since Hansard is not admissible as evidence in Federal Courts. The Hartzell attorney referred to the question and answer to prove that there was a popular outcry against deporting Hartzell from England. This offered the prosecution opportunity to read the question and answer into the record. Thus question hour served the ends of American justice.

In 1938, Duncan Sandys, son-in-law of Winston Churchill, tried to arouse the War Office to action by a series of questions about the air defenses of London.²⁹ Using secret information from Captain Hogan, his superior officer in the Territorial Army, he attempted to convince Leslie Hore-Belisha of the seriousness of the situation.³⁰ He testified that he did not expect to put the question since he was

sure that the War Office would request him not to put the questions.³¹ The War Office became alarmed, not about the air defenses of London, but about the source of Sandys' information.³² When the Attorney-General talked to Sandys about the matter, Sandys became convinced that a matter of privilege was involved. Acting on the advice of the Speaker of the House of Commons he presented a motion for a select committee to investigate the relation of Members of Parliament to the Official Secrets Acts.³³ The Prime Minister (Neville Chamberlain) promised an investigation. The London Times thought the Government must avoid the suspicion that there had been "an attempt to suppress the giving of inconvenient information to members."³⁴ The New York Times took this occasion to express its respect for question hour:

The system of parliamentary questions is a vital part of the British governmental system and there is bound to be much alarm over even the slightest step toward hamstringing the discussions thereby raised. Any attempt to proceed against members if they refuse to reveal the sources of the information upon which they base questions is certain to be regarded by many as a blow to the British Constitution.³⁵

When Sandys was called to testify before a military court of inquiry, he raised the question of a "breach of privilege." This was referred to the Committee on Privileges by a motion made by Prime Minister Chamberlain.³⁶ Sandys' motion to appoint an investigating committee was taken over by the Government.³⁷ The Committee on Privileges reported that there had been a violation of the privileges of parliament but it did not recommend any further action.³⁸ In its

report of September 28, 1938 the investigating committee took a serious view of the threat to parliamentary government (this was during the Czechoslovakian crisis). It reported:

Your Committee desire at the outset to emphasize the great importance of the questions referred to them, which directly affect not only Members of Parliament in the discharge of their duties, but which indirectly concern every individual citizen whose right it is in the last resort to have his grievances ventilated by speech and question on the floor of the House of Commons.³⁹

The committee was convinced that it was concerned with protecting the "very roots of our democratic system." Its report, however, was not too critical of anyone.⁴⁰ The Labour minority on the committee favored a more sharply worded report.⁴¹ The Prime Minister belittled the importance of the case to the individual member. Winston Churchill thought that the War Secretary could not tell the difference between a Member of Parliament and a "very junior lieutenant."⁴² The London Times thought the whole affair more "silly than sinister."⁴³

The investigating committee was reconstituted and charged with an examination of the general question of the relation of members to the Official Secrets Act.⁴⁴ In the hearings held by the reconstituted committee, the Attorney-General agreed with a member of the committee (Mr. Walkden) that it was the whole business of Parliament, including questions, which was privileged and not debating alone.⁴⁵ In the Commons debate on the committee report Prime Minister Chamberlain supported the committee's recommendation that the House of Commons should adopt a resolution asserting the exemption of Members of Parliament from compulsory extraction of information under the Official

Secrets Acts.⁴⁶ The debate brought out Wedgwood Benn's evaluation of the War-time role of Parliament.

Some people say that in war time Parliament should be sandbagged, either in the more active sense of the words or in the more passive; that the House should be hidden and protected like an ancient monument....If we are to have a Himmler, he has got to sit there and be subject to question, he has got to be subject to what is far more important, namely, supplementary questions, and he has got to meet Members of the House of Commons; and he cannot--and this is more important--be insulated by bureaucrats.⁴⁷

During the same month, Sir Henry Page Croft expressed the view that questions took time from the war effort and gave aid and comfort to the enemy. In particular he thought they offered ammunition to Dr. Goebbels and the German Propaganda Ministry.⁴⁸ Vernon Bartlett, M. P., however, proposed to extend the time for questions and limit each member to two questions each question day.⁴⁹ The London Times supported this suggestion by saying:

In times of war, there is everything to be said for keeping Parliament in constant session and for making its procedure as businesslike as possible. No part of this procedure is more businesslike than question and answer. There is no better way of exposing both mares' nests and blunders.⁵⁰

Sir Henry Page Croft replied to Bartlett by making a plea to ease the burden of Ministers and Departments and "concentrate solely on

measures and matters of direct aid to victory."⁵¹ To this observer it seems clear that Parliament in war is restricted by the very nature of the emergency, thus further amplifying the importance of question hour to the private member.

Question time is testing time for Ministers. The Spectator said in 1939 that the "ineptitude" of Sir John Anderson at question hour was "rapidly persuading the House that his previous great reputation in other spheres" did not "warrant his inclusion in the Cabinet and his control of one of the principal services."⁵² Harold Laski has indicated his belief in the importance of questions by saying:

Even the secrecy which necessarily enshrouds the operations of war has not prevented question-time in the House of Commons from remaining a vital check on the habits of the executive, and no one knows better than the prime minister that his colleague who cannot survive the ordeal of "supplementaries" with undimmed reputation is not likely to survive at all.⁵³

In France the interpellation has been called the "leading institution of French parliamentary procedure."⁵⁴ The debate and the ordre du jour (resolution) which close the debate on the interpellation were often factors in bringing the life of a Ministry to an end. Of the one hundred and six ministerial crises in the Third Republic, sixty-three were provoked in parliament. Of these sixty-three, thirty were provoked by interpellations.⁵⁵ The political stability of the Government in England is in marked contrast to the instability of the Ministry in France.⁵⁶ The shortness of the lease on life of a French Ministry is an incontrovertible fact.⁵⁷ The facts do not seem to justify the assertion that

three out of five crises in France can be traced to the interpellation.⁵⁸ Soulier, however, is of the opinion that the interpellation may be a factor in weakening the position of the Ministry, even though the final defeat may not come on an ordre du jour closing an interpellation.⁵⁹ The major cause of political instability in France would seem to be not the interpellation but the confused and complex party system which plagued France, especially under the Third Republic. "With unstable party groups and with each Deputy loyal only to himself, the right of interpellation becomes the weapon of every ambition, every vanity, every grudge, every curiosity."⁶⁰ A strong Ministry with a well disciplined following does not find the interpellation a threat to its continuance in office.⁶¹ With all of the weaknesses which can be pointed out in French parliamentary government, there can be no doubt of the efficiency of the interpellation as a form of parliamentary control.

Debate such as is part of the interpellation in France is not possible at question hour in the House of Commons. Before 1882, however, debate often took place through the device of moving the adjournment. Between 1882 and 1902 the practice was regulated in order to permit all questions to be answered before any debate was permitted to take place. Since 1902 the debate has been postponed till evening. These restrictions themselves greatly limited the value of the motion to adjourn and the attendant discussion. The increasing reluctance of the Speaker to permit such motions, especially since 1920, has resulted in the almost complete disappearance of the adjournment motion from the practice of the House of Commons.

The adjournment motion in England has never resulted in political consequences comparable to the interpellation and ordre du jour in France. Contrary to the impression in some quarters, the Government does not resign in England as a result of the vote on such a motion for adjournment. Lowell reports two cases where the motion was carried against the Government, but the Cabinet did not fall and no Minister resigned.⁶² It is unusual for a vote to be taken on the motion to adjourn. Ordinarily either the motion is withdrawn or the debate lapses automatically at 11:00 P.M. under the rules for the interruption of debate, without any vote being taken.

The motion to adjourn was carried on May 10, 1881. Charles Stewart Parnell asked a private-notice question about the arrest of John Dillon, M. P. He was not satisfied with the answer; consequently he moved the adjournment of the House. After a debate, and a promise from the Government that it would provide for full discussion of the Dillon case without undue delay, the motion was agreed to. It can be said the only result of carrying the motion was a Government assurance that Dillon's arrest and the Protection of Person and Property Act would be given early opportunity for discussion.⁶³

July 5, 1887 the motion to adjourn was carried against the Government by a vote of 153 to 48. This is the famous Cass case. On July 1, Atherley-Jones asked a question about her arrest on a charge of solicitation (prostitution).⁶⁴ Supporting the constable who had made the arrest, the Home Secretary (Matthews) refused to make any investigation or take any action. On July 5, he again refused to do any thing.⁶⁵ The motion to adjourn to discuss an urgent matter of public importance (the formula set up by the revision of the rules in 1882) was made, and

a general debate took place. At the end of this debate the motion was carried against the government. There was no doubt that the House was dissatisfied with the attitude of the Home Secretary.⁶⁶ The discussion did produce results. The next day, in answer to a question, the Government indicated that a full investigation would be made of the conduct of the judge and constable concerned in the Cass case.⁶⁷ The Leader of the House of Commons made it clear the Government did not consider the resignation of any Minister to be required. This precipitated a brief exchange, at the close of which a member (Clancy) rose to say:

I wish to ask whether in view of the announcement the right hon. Gentleman has just made, it is intended to call on any member of the Government to resign?

Mr. Speaker: Order, Order! The Clerk will proceed to read the Orders of the Day.⁶⁸

Since the Cass case, the motion to adjourn does not appear to have been carried against the Government, but there have been occasions on which the Government has bowed to the will of the House. Stanley Baldwin, for example, moved the adjournment of the House over the inclusion of Lord Hewart of Bury, Lord Chief Justice of England, on the Committee of Electoral Reform. The Speaker permitted the motion to be made even though there was doubt about the Government's responsibility.⁶⁹ The Government wanted the motion postponed. When the debate took place the same evening, the resignation of Lord Hewart was announced. The motion to adjourn was defeated.⁷⁰ The Lord Chief Justice defended both his right to sit on the Committee of Electoral Reform and his right to

resign when the matter was raised in the House of Commons.⁷¹

The usefulness of the motion for adjournment, even in the restricted form in which it is now available, is best revealed by the famous Savidge case in 1928. In this case, the motion arose out of unsatisfactory answers by Sir W. Joynson-Hicks to a private-notice question.⁷² When Sir John Simon's moving speech was interrupted with the interjection, "The Home Secretary is in the Dock!", he replied, "The Home Secretary is constitutionally responsible to the House and I am all for holding him responsible." Realizing the temper of the House, the Home Secretary promised an investigation and asked that the motion be withdrawn. The motion was defeated but was not withdrawn.⁷³

Within a week, a tribunal was appointed to investigate the case.⁷⁴ The report of the tribunal in July found no criticism to be made of the Director of Public Prosecutions or the police officers. They had followed established procedure as approved by their superiors.⁷⁵ The tribunal did take exception to the use of the procedure in the case of Miss Savidge, because of the intimate way in which she was concerned in the conduct of the two constables whose conduct was being investigated.⁷⁶ The tribunal thought she should have been approached through her parents instead of at work. They also said she should have been fully informed of the consequences to herself in consenting to make a statement.⁷⁷ It was thought a person making a statement should ordinarily not be taken to Scotland Yard. In cases involving women's morals, any statement should be taken in the presence of another woman, unless the woman being questioned "expressly requests that no woman should be present."⁷⁸

The Labour member of the tribunal (Lees-Smith) made a separate report in which he supported Miss Savidge's charges of third degree procedures, and condemned the police official making the investigation (Collins).⁷⁹ He also questioned the propriety of having the police investigate police procedures, and suggested that the Director of Public Prosecutions ought to have his own staff to make such investigations.⁸⁰ He agreed with the majority report that a distinction should be made between witnesses who have a personal interest in the matter being investigated and those who do not have. He was impressed with the role Parliament played in getting a hearing for Miss Savidge, and concluded, "Great perils to private citizens and to civil liberty have been revealed by her experience."⁸¹

A Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure was appointed. It recommended an increase in the number of policewomen and their use in taking statements in cases involving sex offenses.⁸² The Commission also recommended that plainclothes officers should not be used to make arrests when the charge was indecent conduct, but they should be used exclusively for detective work.⁸³

In 1930, as a result of a motion for the adjournment, the Foreign Secretary gave assurances that he would consult party leaders before committing the Government under Article 16 of the League of Nations Covenant. While he would not guarantee to consult the House of Commons, Commander Locker-Lampson withdrew his motion--apparently satisfied with the assurances of party consultation.⁸⁴ The same year, although an adjournment motion was not permitted, the First Commissioner of Works did give assurances that the plans for Edinburgh would be modified during the recess.⁸⁵

Subjects opened at question hour may be followed up on other occasions. It is not always necessary to move the formal adjournment of the house under the Standing Orders in order to get opportunity for discussion. In 1923, a number of questions were asked about deportations under the Restoration of Order in Ireland Bill. The Government proposed to deprive men declared by the courts to have been illegally deported of their right to sue on the ground that the Home Secretary had acted in good faith. This matter came up for discussion on the Home Office Vote in Committee of Supply. Realizing there was sympathy for these men in the House, the Government amended the bill to allow them compensation on verification of their claims.⁸⁶ In 1933, Brigadier General Spears asked a question about the arrest of Flying Officer Fitzpatrick by plainclothes officers.⁸⁷ In this case the Speaker suggested the matter be raised on the appropriation bill instead of moving the adjournment.⁸⁸ As a result of the discussion the Home Secretary receded from the position he had taken at question hour, and ordered an investigation to be made.

Discussion also takes place on routine motions for adjournment for Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, and summer recesses. This is restricted to matters not requiring legislation.⁸⁹ A more frequent opportunity is available at night, again with the restriction that nothing requiring a substantive motion or legislation can be opened for discussion.⁹⁰ The discussion on the motion for adjournment at night is strictly limited since the House adjourns automatically at 11:30 P.M. and the motion cannot come up for discussion before 11:00 P.M. This makes never more than thirty minutes available for discussion. A member may get a little window dressing done and he may put the Minister in an unfavorable

light by using most of the time and rushing the Government's reply.⁹¹ The suspension of the eleven o'clock rule or the consideration of exempted business may eliminate any discussion by taking up the whole of the time before 11:30. When time is available, discussion on the adjournment at night is a valuable addition to question hour.⁹² Extent of the use of this device is tentatively indicated by the fact that twenty-nine notices of intent to raise a matter on the adjournment at night were given in the 1929-30 session of the House of Commons, but only twelve of the discussions actually took place. In two cases the same subject was discussed. Usually the matter discussed at night had already been raised at question hour.

Question hour in England offers the private member a chance for airing grievances against the Government, for what Harold Laski calls "ventilation" of grievance.⁹³ It has been hailed as a "godsend to the private member,"⁹⁴ and also as "one of the greatest privileges which private members possess."⁹⁵ One observer calls it the only means open to private members to express their views on many matters.⁹⁶ There is temptation to use questions for self-advertisement. Petty and trivial questions place a heavy burden on permanent officials. It is only natural that the private member might feel that questions were indispensable and yet an official burdened with the petty questions might consider them a burden and a detriment to the service. This contrast of view is vividly expressed by Harold Nicolson, speaking from his own experience both as a civil servant and a Member of Parliament. He says:

When I was a civil servant I used to regard Parliamentary Questions as a method by which, at the expense of public time and money, the pushing politician was able to advertise himself. Since entering the House of Commons my views on the subject have undergone a remarkable change, I no longer regard Parliamentary Questions as a public nuisance; I regard them as the shield and spearhead of our liberties.⁹⁷

It is Harold Laski's view that the function of the private member of the House of Commons is "ventilation of grievance; the extraction of information; the criticism of the administrative process; what contributions he can make in debate."⁹⁸ One can readily conclude that question hour "remains the most effective check upon bureaucracy."⁹⁹ The interpellation is the heart of French parliamentary government. It makes the concept of responsible parliamentary government a reality by providing an efficient mechanism for the control of Ministry and permanent officials.¹⁰⁰ In England question hour is the heart of parliamentary government. It is not too much to say that it "is the most important feature of Parliament."¹⁰¹ The practice of representative democracy in England has brought one answer to the vexing question of how to secure freedom of inquiry without making efficient administration impossible. Pride in our own institutions should not blind us to the value of English question hour as a guide to the improvement of of our own representative democracy.

1
A Diary of Two Parliaments (1885), II, 146-149.

2
Governance of England (1904), p. 92

3
Harry Graham, The Mother of Parliaments (1910), pp. 240-241, cites
the Edinburgh Review, 1854, p. 254.

4
My Discovery of England (1922), pp. 56, 101.

5
New York Times Magazine, April 27, 1941, p. 31.

6
Rudolf Kircher, Wie's Die Engländer Machen (1930), p. 41.

7
237 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1761-1762.

8
235 ibid. 2252-2253.

9
233 ibid. 2100-2101.

10
249 ibid. 2027.

11
The English Constitution (1878), pp. 180-181; ibid. (1902), pp.
248-249. Bagehot explained the nature of question hour thus:

A Parliament is nothing less than a big meeting of more or
less idle people....As soon as bore A ends, bore B begins. Some
inquire from genuine love of knowledge, or from a real wish to
improve what they ask about,--others to see their name in the
papers,--others to show a watchful constituency that they are
alert,--others to get on and to get a place in the government,--
others from an accumulation of little motives they could not
themselves analyze, or because it is their habit to ask things.
And a proper reply must be given. It was said that "Darby Griffith

destroyed Lord Palmerston's first Government," and undoubtedly the cheerful impertinence with which in the conceit of victory that minister answered grave men much hurt in his Parliamentary power.

12

This Orsini affair arose out of the attempted assassination of Napoleon III. Critical comment appeared in France of Orsini being permitted to live in England after the attempt on Napoleon's life. The French Government put pressure on the English Government to do something about political criminals like Orsini. The Conspiracy to Murder Bill was the English Government's attempt to appease Napoleon and his Government.

13

148 Parl. Deb. 3s. 1470.

14

Ibid., 1789-1834; Reginald F. Palgrave, The House of Commons (1878), pp. 39-40, expresses the opinion that Palmerston's defeat was the result of his attitude at question hour.

15

237 Parl. Deb. 3s. 464-472, 1325-1332; 239 ibid. 1374-1375, 1429-1449; 241 ibid. 965-966.

16

London Daily News, November 1, 1901, p. 3.

17

Standard (London), February 5, 1902, p. 2.

18

Ibid.

19

200 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 204, 206, 414-416.

20

Harold J. Laski, Parliamentary Government in England (London, 1938), p. 148. Miss Savidge was implicated in the Leo Money case. Her testimony

was taken in an investigation whose purpose was to clear two plainclothes policemen accused by Leo Money of improper conduct.

21

Cmd. 3147, pp. 3-4. Another question had been asked about the Savidge case on May 7, 1928.

22

214-215
Cf. infra, pp. x-x.

23

237 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 2635, 2722-2733; 238 ibid. 647; 239 ibid. 1765; 240 ibid. 1957-1958; 242 ibid. 32-33, 613-614, 900; Times (London), July 29, 1930, p. 15; The Parliamentary Gazette, No. 89, December, 1931. The Ancient Monuments Bill was introduced in the House of Lords by Lord Ponsonby on December 3, 1930. The Bill passed the House of Commons on April 30, 1931. The Bill became law after the Lords accepted the Commons' amendments.

24

J. E. Mills, From the Back Benches [1924], pp. 23-25.

25

Detroit Free Press, Feature Section, March 25, 1934, signed article by Thomas M. Johnson.

26

United States Consulate General, London, 1933 Hartzell file. Mr. Davis said in this letter:

As you know, people in the United States have a tremendous respect for the working of the Parliamentary system in this country and particularly for the way in which the Government be asked questions in the House of Commons. It has therefore occurred to me that it would be useful in the Grand Jury proceedings, and particularly at the trial to follow, if the Government could show that a member of the house has asked the Government:

1. Is there an unsettled or improperly divided Drake estate?
2. Has the Government negotiated with anyone regarding its settlement or re-distribution?
3. Has the Government had any negotiations regarding this or any other matter with one Oscar M. Hartzell, who was recently deported by the Home Secretary?

27

277 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 988 (May 4, 1933); see also letter by Sir Harry Britain to Mr. Davis explaining that Sir Shirley Benn had been asked to put the question, 1933 Hartzell file.

28

1933 Hartzell file, May 6, 1933. It is a footnote to the stubbornness of human nature that Hartzell's victims raised \$60,000 to help pay the cost of taking an appeal to the Circuit Court of Appeals.

29

336 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 220-221 (May 17, 1938), 1009-1010 (May 24, 1938); Parliamentary Papers, 1937-38, Vol VII (No. 173), First Report, Select Committee on the Official Secrets Acts, 1938, pp. x-xi.

30

Ibid., pp. xii-xiv; 337 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1534-1540 (June 27, 1938); Times (London), June 28, 1938, p. 9.

31

Parliamentary Papers, 1937-38, Vol. VII (No. 173), First Report, Select Committee on the Official Secrets Acts. 1938, pp. xiv, xxiii. The committee thought this letter to the War Secretary was a "somewhat disingenuous letter." They pointed out the information was secret and could not be publicly denied.

32

Ibid., pp. xiv-xvii.

33

Ibid., pp. vi, xx-xxx; 337 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1534-1540; Times (London), June 28, 1938, p. 9.

34
June 28, 1938, p. 15.

35
June 28, 1938, p. 5.

36
Times (London), June 29, 1938, p. 14; June 30, 1938, pp. 8-9;

337 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1915-1925; Parliamentary Papers, 1937-38, Vol. VII (No. 173), First Report, Select Committee on the Official Secrets Acts, 1938, pp. xxxix-xl.

37
337 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1724, 2155-2237; Times (London), June 29, 1938, p. 8; July 1, 1938, pp. 8-9.

38
337 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 2132-2133; Times (London), July 1, 1938, p. 16; 338 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 949-1014 (July 11, 1938); Times (London), July 12, 1938, pp. 9-10. Unanimous approval was given by the House of Commons to the report of the Committee on Privileges. When it was called to the attention of the Speaker that the court of inquiry, which had been the basis of the committee's recommendation that there had been "a breach of privilege," had never met, and that its members did not have any part in summoning Sandys, it was most evident that there had been considerable confusion in the whole affair. The next day the matter was referred to the Select Committee on the Official Secrets Acts, see 338 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1807-1814, 2013-2043; Times (London), July 19, 1938, pp. 8-9; July 20, pp. 8, 14.

39
Parliamentary Papers, 1937-38, Vol. VII (No. 173), First Report, Select Committee on the Official Secrets Acts, 1938, p. v; 339 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 3, the report was ordered printed; 338 ibid. 2914-2915; Times (London), July 28, 1938, p. 9, the committee was given power to

sit during the recess. The report was completed during the recess on August 4, 1938.

40

Parliamentary Papers, 1937-38, Vol. VII (No. 173), First Report, Select Committee on the Official Secrets Acts. 1938, p. xii.

41

Times (London), October 19, 1938, p. 9.

42

342 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons (December 5, 1938), the debate in the House of Commons lasted from four until eight-thirty.

43

October 19, 1938, p. 13.

44

342 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 964.

45

Times (London), February 23, 1939, p. 11; March 2, p. 11.

46

353 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1071-1073 (November 21, 1939).

See 345 ibid. 2798 (April 5, 1939), for the second report of this committee to the House of Commons.

47

353 ibid. 1073-1075.

48

Times (London), November 11, 1939, p. 4.

49

Ibid., November 15, 1939, p. 9.

50

Ibid., November 16, 1939, p. 9.

51

Ibid., November 17, 1939, p. 9.

52

Vol. 162, p. 632 (April 29, 1939).

53

"The Parliamentary and Presidential Systems," 4 Public Administration Review 348 (Autumn, 1944).

54

Charles Seignobos, Histoire politique de l'Europe contemporaine, 1814-1914, I (1924), 284; A Political History of Contemporary Europe (1900), p. 227.

55

Cf. infra p. 266. Auguste Soulier, L'instabilité Ministerielle (1939), gives a careful and scholarly analysis of the cause of Ministerial crises.

56

Emile Giraud, Le pouvoir exécutif (1938), p. 168; W. L. Middleton, The French Political System (1933), pp. 167-168; Soulier, op. cit., pp. 114, 394-396, 567-568; Herman Finer, Foreign Governments at Work (1921), p. 35; Ernest Mélot, L'évolution du régime parlementaire (1936), pp. 175-177; 190-191.

57

Giraud, op. cit., pp. 247-253. From September 4, 1870 to April 10, 1938, there were ninety-nine Ministries (not including as new Ministries those which remained the same after a new President of the Republic took office). During this period the average life of a Ministry was eight months and six days. From September 4, 1870 to January 19, 1920, it was nine months and twenty-six days for sixty Ministries; from January 20, 1920 to April 9, 1938, five months and eighteen days for thirty-nine Ministries. The shortest term of office was three days; the longest, almost three years. Nineteen Ministries lasted more than a year; nine, more than two years. After 1933 the criticism of parliamentary government in France was frequent and often bitter. See especially Giraud, op. cit., pp. 247-253; Jacques Bardoux, La France de demain (1936), pp. 83-88; André Tardieu,

"Reformer ou Casser," Revue de deux mondes, March 1, 1934, pp. 135-161; Mélot, op. cit., pp. 224-228, 230-238, 249-250; Yusuf Haikal, Le Président du Conseil (1937), pp. 459-523; Maurice Ordinaire, "Agir," 158 Revue politique et parlementaire 419-421 (March 10, 1934)/

58

Dorothy M. Pickles, The French Political Scene (1938), pp. 50-52; Finer, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

59

Op. cit., pp. 239-240.

60

Antoin Beau, Le droit d'interpellation (1897), p. 205--the translation is mine.

61

Soulier, op. cit., pp. 241-247.

62

A. Lawrence Lowell, The Government of England (1924), I, 336.

63

261 Parl. Deb. 3s., 183-216.

64

316 ibid. 1491-1494.

65

Ibid., 1782-1785.

66

Ibid., 1796-1825.

67

Ibid., 1826-1830.

68

Ibid., 1830.

69

232 Parl. Deb 5s., Commons 1937-1941 (December 2, 1929).

70

Ibid., 2019-2025.

71

Times (London), December 4, 1929, p. 15.

72

Cmd. 3147, pp. 11-13; 217 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1216-1220.

73

Ibid., 1303-1339.

74

Cmd. 3147. Appointed May 24, 1928. Its members were Sir John Eldon Bankes, G. C. B., Mr. Hastings Bertrand Lees-Smith, M. P., and Mr. John Sames Withers, C. B. E., M. P.

75

The police investigation which precipitated this incident was made to clear the two constables who had brought charges against Miss Savidge and Sir Leo Money. The magistrate who heard the charges dismissed the case. Miss Savidge was being questioned about the events which led up to the charges by the two constables against her and Sir Leo Money.

76

Cmd. 3147, pp. 3-4, 13-15.

77

Ibid., pp. 15-16.

78

Ibid.

79

Ibid., pp. 17-33, especially, p.28.

80

Ibid., p. 28.

81

Ibid., pp. 28-30.

82

Cmd. 3297, pp. 121-122. This Commission reported March 16, 1929.

83

Ibid., pp. 115, 120.

84

237 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1752-1753, 1776, 1860-1864.

85

242 ibid. 27-31, 41-42; Times (London), July 20, 1930, p. 8.

86
166 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 1566-1577, 1674-1677, 1681.

87
280 ibid. 2589-2593.

88
Ibid., 2597-2598, 2719-2740.

89
W. I. Jennings, Parliament (1940), pp. 100-109, gives a good discussion of the various forms of the adjournment motion.

90
234 Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons 950.

91.
Under the rules of the House of Commons, business under consideration is interrupted at 11:00 P.M. The House may be counted out between 11:00 and 11:30. In any event, it adjourns automatically at 11:30 P. M. without any vote or resolution.

92
Jennings, op. cit., pp. 105-106.

93
Laski, op. cit., pp. 144, 147, 165-167.

94
Robert Farquharson, The House of Commons from Within (1912), pp. 58-60, says in full:

Question time is a real reward to the private member, for not only can he advertise himself at this time, but more abuses have been prevented, jobs checked, and acts of oppression and violence both at home and abroad scotched and killed by this than by any other means. Of course, it is liable to be overdone.

95
Parliamentary Papers, 1930-31, Vol. VIII (No. 161), Minutes of Evidence, p. 400 (questions 4063-4066). Henry Snell, Daily Life in Parliament (1930), p. 34 says:

The right to question Ministers is one of the greatest privileges which private members possess, and they will not

willingly allow it to be taken from them. It provides almost their only chance of drawing the attention of the House to matters in which they are directly interested; but like all privileges it may be misused, especially through the nimble supplementary question, which requires and receives the Speaker's careful attention.

96

Opinion of Sir Horace Dawkins, when he was Clerk of the House of Commons, expressed in a letter dated February 10, 1932.

97

"People and Things," 163 The Spectator 583 (October 27, 1939).

98

Op. cit., pp. 165-167.

99

Lord Wedgwood, Testament to Democracy (1943), p. 58.

100

Deputy Marcel, Annales, Chambre des Députés, May 27, 1920, p. 1404.

101

Lord Wedgwood, op. cit., p. 55.

TABLE 1

STANDING ORDERS*

Questions

7.--(1.) Notices of questions shall be given by members in writing to the clerk at the table without reading them viva voce in the House, unless the consent of Mr. Speaker to any particular question has been previously obtained.

(2.) Questions shall be taken on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, after private business has been disposed of, and not later than three of the clock.

(3.) No questions shall be taken after a quarter before four of the clock, except questions which have not been answered in consequence of the absence of the minister to whom they are addressed, and questions which have not appeared on the paper, but which are of an urgent character, and relate either to matters of public importance or to the arrangement of business.

(4.) Any member who desires an oral answer to his question may distinguish it by an asterisk, but notice of any such question must appear at latest on the notice paper circulated on the day before that on which an answer is desired.

(5.) If any member does not distinguish his question by an asterisk, or if he or any other member deputed by him is not present to ask it, or if it is not reached by a quarter before four of the clock, the minister to whom it is addressed shall cause an answer to be printed in the Official Report of the Parliamentary Debates, unless the member has before questions are disposed of signified his desire to postpone the question.

* Standing Orders of the House of Commons (1938), pp. 9-11, 19-20.

TABLE 1 (Continued)

STANDING ORDERS

Adjournment on Matter of Public Importance.

8. No motion for the adjournment of the House shall be made until all the questions asked at the commencement of business on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday have been disposed of, and no such motion shall be made before the orders of the day or notices of motion have been entered upon, except by leave of the House, unless a member rising in his place shall propose to move the adjournment for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, and not less than forty members shall thereupon rise in their places to support the motion, or unless, if fewer than forty members and not less than ten shall thereupon rise in their places, the House shall, on a division, upon question put forthwith, determine whether such motion shall be made. If the motion is so supported, or the House so determines that it shall be made, it shall stand over until half-past seven on the same day.

Anticipation.

9. In determining whether a discussion is out of order on the ground of anticipation, regard shall be had by Mr. Speaker to the probability of the matter anticipated being brought before the House within a reasonable time.

Adjournment and Counting Out.

21. When a motion is made for the adjournment of a debate, or of the House during any debate, or that the chairman do report progress, or do leave the chair, the debate thereupon shall be confined to the matter

TABLE 1 (Continued)

STANDING ORDERS

of such motion; and no member, having moved or seconded any such motion, shall be entitled to move, or second, any similar motion during the same debate.

22. If Mr. Speaker, or the chairman, shall be of opinion that a motion for the adjournment of a debate, or of the House, during any debate, or that the chairman do report progress, or do leave the chair, is an abuse of the rules of the House, he may forthwith put the question thereupon from the chair, or he may decline to propose the question thereupon to the House.

23. The House, when it meets on Friday, shall, at its rising, stand adjourned until the following Monday without any question being put, unless the House shall otherwise resolve.

24. On Fridays the House shall stand adjourned if at any time after one of the clock on the House being counted it shall appear that forty members are not present.

25. The House shall not be counted between a quarter-past eight and a quarter-past nine of the clock, but if on a division taken on any business between a quarter-past eight and a quarter-past nine of the clock it appears that forty members are not present, the business shall stand over until the next sitting of the House, and the next business shall be taken.

TABLE 2

ORDER OF QUESTIONS

Day	Beginning	Not later than No. 45	End
Monday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indian Office 2. Foreign Office 3. Ministry of Pensions 4. Overseas Trade 5. Ministry of Agriculture 6. Post Office 7. Office of Works 8. Attorney General 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prime Minister 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board of Education 2. War Office 3. Home Office 4. Chancellor of the Exchequer 5. Secretary to Treasury 6. Ministry of Transport
Tuesday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dominions Office 2. Board of Trade to War Office Scottish Office 5. Department of Mines 6. Ministry of Pensions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prime Minister 2. Chancellor of Exchequer 3. Secretary to Treasury 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foreign Office 2. Ministry of Health 3. Colonial Office 4. Office of Works
Wednesday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foreign Office 2. Admiralty 3. Colonial Office 4. Air Ministry 5. Ministry of Transport 6. Office of Works 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prime Minister 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Home Office 2. Chancellor of the Exchequer 3. Secretary to Treasury 4. Ministry of Labour
Thursday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministry of Labour 2. Home Office 3. Board of Education 4. Ministry of Health 5. Chancellor of the Exchequer 6. Secretary to Treasury 7. Ministry of Agriculture 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prime Minister 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. War Office 2. India Office 3. Foreign Office 4. Admiralty

N.B.—Questions to Ministers not mentioned in the Table follow those to the Ministers whose questions are to be placed at the beginning, subject to the condition that the questions to certain Ministers shall begin not later than No. 45.

*On Tuesdays the Dominions Office, Board of Trade, the War Office, the Scottish Office, and the Department of Mines in turn take the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth places in answering questions. Thus on five successive Tuesdays (Beginning on Tuesday 2nd December 1930) the order changes as follows:—

1st week	2nd week	3rd week	4th week	5th week
1. Department of Mines	1. Scottish Office	1. War Office	1. Board of Trade	1. Dominions Office
2. Dominions Office	2. Department of Mines	2. Scottish Office	2. War Office	2. Board of Trade
3. Board of Trade	3. Dominions Office	3. Department of Mines	3. Scottish Office	3. War Office
4. War Office	4. Board of Trade	4. Dominions Office	4. Department of Mines	4. Scottish Office
5. Scottish Office	5. War Office	5. Board of Trade	5. Dominions Office	5. Department of Mines

TABLE 3

HOUSE OF COMMONS
QUESTIONS OF WHICH PRINTED NOTICE WAS GIVEN*

Session	Days House sat	Questions
1873	112	1,002
1874	97	851
1875	121	1,171
1876	126	1,346
1877	122	1,332
1878	136	1,283
1878-79	130	1,628
1880 (Sessions 1 & 2)	121	1,546
1881	154	3,243
1882	162	3,663
1883	129	3,185
1884	126	3,555
1884-85	129	3,354
1886 (Sessions 1 & 2)	120	2,821
1887	160	5,030
1888	160	5,549
1889	122	4,049
1890	125	4,407
1890-91	141	3,770
1892 (Sessions 1 & 2)	96	2,944
1893-94	226	6,534
1894	113	3,567
1895 (Sessions 1 & 2)	117	3,873
1896	124	4,464
1897	127	4,824
1898	119	5,155
1899 (Sessions 1 & 2)	126	4,521
1900 (Sessions 1 & 2)	124	5,106
1901	118	6,448
1902 (before May 5)**		2,917
TOTAL QUESTIONS from 1873 to May 5, 1902		103,138

Session	Days House sat	Starred	Unstarred	Total Questions
1902 (After May 5)**		2,415	1,836	4,251
1903	115	2,544	1,992	4,536
1904	124	3,719	2,214	5,933
1905	114	4,120	2,124	6,244
1906	156	8,614	3,251	11,865
1907	131	7,439	2,708	10,147
1908	171	10,181	3,630	13,811
1909	179	8,799	3,452	12,251
1910	102	6,002	2,199	8,201
1911	172	11,984	3,455	15,439
1912-13	206	16,127	3,786	19,913
1913	102	7,162	1,774	8,936

*Parliamentary Papers, 1887, LXVI (No. 131), 115; Ibid., 1901, LVIII (No. 349), 657; Ibid., 1905, LXII (No. 194), 131; A. A. Taylor, Statistics Relative to the Business of the House [1914], p. 183.

**There were 181 days on which Parliament sat in 1902 and the total of all questions during the session was 7,168.

TABLE 3
(Continued)HOUSE OF COMMONS
QUESTIONS OF WHICH PRINTED NOTICE WAS GIVEN*

Session	Days House sat	Starred	Unstarred	Total Questions
1914	130	5,701	2,004	7,705
1914-16	155	10,535	2,441	12,976
1916	127	13,246	2,497	15,743
1917	181	16,344	2,802	19,146
1918	121	10,223	1,802	12,025
1919	163	16,378	4,145	20,523
1920	167	15,033	3,619	18,652
1921 (Sess.1&2)	145	11,476	2,657	14,133
1922 (Sess.1&2)	133	10,509	2,360	12,869
1923	114	9,954	2,416	12,370
1924	129	9,987	3,105	13,092
1924-25	148	10,682	3,353	14,035
1926	151	8,264	2,449	10,713
1927	144	8,549	1,987	10,536
1928	115	6,053	1,506	7,559
1928-29	99	5,407	1,667	7,074
1929-30	189	13,907	4,420	18,327
1930-31	187	11,606	2,767	14,373
1931-32	155	8,259	1,598	9,857
1932-33	143	6,542	1,017	7,559
1933-34	156	7,340	1,428	8,768
1934-35	151	7,079	1,370	8,449
1935-36	137	8,613	1,602	10,215
1936-37	157	10,041	1,728	11,769
1937-38	168	11,419	2,368	13,787
1938-39	200	15,191	3,269	18,460
1939-40	127	10,220	3,316	13,536
1940-41	113	8,354	2,471	10,825
1941-42	116	9,029	2,563	11,592
1942-43	122	9,363	2,548	11,911
1943-44	153	8,938	2,560	11,498
1944-45	95	6,252	1,604	7,856
1945-46	212	21,135	6,178	27,313
Total(May 5, 1902 to 1946)		430,735	115,838	546,573

TOTAL ALL QUESTIONS
(1873 to 1946)

649,711

*Data furnished by Sir Lonsdale Webber, Clerk of the House of Commons, (to Mrs. M. B. Fox) for 1914 to 1927; by W. J. Pusey of the Office of Votes and Proceedings for 1928 to 1934; by the late J. W. C. Beesley, Clerk in the House of Commons Library for 1934 to 1939; by E. G. C. Weatherley, Reference Division of the House of Commons Library for 1940 to 1946; Weatherley also furnished the data on number of days House sat for the years 1914 to 1946; A. A. Taylor, Statistics Relative to the Business of the House [1914], p. 183 gives the data for days on which the House sat from 1902 to 1913.

TABLE 4

ORAL QUESTIONS, 1871 to 1932*

No.	T**	No.	T**	No.	T**
<u>National Assembly</u>		<u>1. Législature</u>		<u>2. Législature</u>	
1871	52	S. O. 1876	22	1877	1
1872	21	S. E. 1876	6	1878	30
1873	16	S. O. 1877	21	S. O. 1879	21
1874	13	TOTAL	49	S. E. 1879	4
1875	14			S. O. 1880	10
TOTAL	116			S. E. 1880	6
				S. O. 1881	22
				TOTAL	94
					5
<u>3. Législature</u>		<u>4. Législature</u>		<u>5. Législature</u>	
S. E. 1881	5	S. E. 1885	11	S. E. 1889	5
S. O. 1882	35	S. O. 1886	31	S. O. 1890	39
S. E. 1882	2	S. E. 1886	7	S. E. 1890	9
S. O. 1883	9	S. O. 1887	25	S. O. 1891	31
S. E. 1883	3	S. E. 1887	6	S. E. 1891	6
S. O. 1884	20	S. O. 1888	28	S. O. 1892	40
S. E. 1884	3	S. E. 1888	17	S. E. 1892	9
S. O. 1885	14	S. O. 1889	38	S. O. 1893	43
TOTAL	91	TOTAL	163	TOTAL	182
	5		20		24
<u>6. Législature</u>		<u>7. Législature</u>		<u>8. Législature</u>	
S. E. 1893	7	S. O. 1898	2	S. O. 1902	5
S. O. 1894	15	S. E. 1898	8	S. E. 1902	12
S. E. 1894	8	S. O. 1899	32	S. O. 1903	20
S. O. 1895	17	S. E. 1899	3	S. E. 1903	3
S. E. 1895	10	S. O. 1900	36	S. O. 1904	7
S. O. 1896	17	S. E. 1900	3	S. E. 1904	6
S. E. 1896	2	S. O. 1901	21	S. O. 1905	10
S. O. 1897	24	S. E. 1901	4	S. E. 1905	11
S. E. 1897	5	S. O. 1902	14	S. O. 1906	25
S. O. 1898	5	TOTAL	123	TOTAL	99
TOTAL	110		14		9
	28				
<u>9. Législature</u>		<u>10. Législature</u>		<u>11. Législature</u>	
S. O. 1906	3	S. O. 1910	5	S. O. 1914	1
S. E. 1906	11	S. E. 1910	8	1915	8
S. O. 1907	23	S. O. 1911	16	1916	8
S. E. 1907	7	S. E. 1911	1	1917	15
S. O. 1908	35	S. O. 1912	15	1918	12
S. E. 1908	11	S. E. 1912	1	S. O. 1919	26
S. O. 1909	17	S. O. 1913	9	TOTAL	70
S. E. 1909	5	S. E. 1913	5		3
S. O. 1910	12	S. O. 1914	4		
TOTAL	124	TOTAL	64		
	5		3		

*Data from Tables des matières of the Journal officiel and the Travaux parlementaires.

**The symbol (T) means questions transformed into interpellation.

TABLE 5

PARTY AFFILIATION OF DEPUTIES ASKING ORAL QUESTIONS*

CABINET	François-Marsal June 9-14, 1924	1st Herriot, June 14, 1924 to April 17, 1925	2nd Painlevé, April 17, to October 29, 1925	3rd Painlevé, October 29, to November 28, 1925	8th Briand, November 28, 1925 to March 9, 1926	9th Briand, March 9, to June 23, 1926	10th Briand, June 23, to July 19, 1926	2nd Herriot, July 19-23, 1926	4th Poincaré, July 23, 1926 to November 11, 1928	TOTAL
Communist	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	19	22
Socialist	0	6	7	0	1	1	0	0	17	32
Republican and Fr. Socialists	0	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7</u>	9
Radical-Socialist	0	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>16</u>	30
Left Radical	0	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	2
Republicans of the Left	<u>0</u>	1	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	3	4
Democrats	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	6
Republican Democratic Left	<u>0</u>	0	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	0	<u>0</u>	0
Republican Democratic Union	<u>0</u>	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	<u>7</u>	13
Unattached (<u>non-inscrit</u>)	0	0	<u>0</u>	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	7	7
Affiliation unknown									1	1
TOTAL	0	20	12	0	6	5	2	0	81	126
Put by parties in cabinet		<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>		<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>		<u>31</u>	<u>48</u>

*The information for this chart was obtained from Tables des matières, 1924-28, Annales, Chambre des Députés. The figures in italics represent questions put by party groups represented in the cabinet.

TABLE 6

Kleine Anfragen*

	1912		1913		1914		1915		1916		1917		1918	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Sozialdemokraten</u> (Socialist)	8	28	24	31	12	21	12	86	21	24	78	34	71	29
<u>Zentrum</u> (Catholic)	3	10	5	6	10	18			15	17	18	8	31	13
<u>Nationalliberale</u> (Liberal)	6	21	14	18	9	16	1	7	23	26	24	10	25	10
<u>Konservative</u> (Conservative)											6	3	17	7
<u>Fortschriftliche</u> <u>Volkspartei</u> (Progressive)	1	4	14	18	12	21			16	18	49	21	69	28
<u>Polen</u> (Polish)			4	5							2	1	3	1
<u>Reichspartei</u> (Reichs party)									1	1	5	2	3	1
<u>Wirtschaftliche</u> <u>Vereinigung</u> (Econ. Union)	10	35	10	13	8	14			9	10	42	18	16	7
<u>Reformpartei</u> (Reform party)					2	4								
<u>Deutsch-</u> <u>Hannoveraner</u> (Ger.-Hannoverian)	1	3	1	1	1	2			2	2	1	$\frac{1}{2}$	2	1
<u>Elsass-Lothringer</u> (Alsace-Lorraine)	2	7	2	3	1	2					3	1	5	2
No party			2	3					1	1			1	$\frac{1}{2}$
Several parties			2	3	1	2	1	7	1	1	3	1	2	1
TOTAL	31		78		56		14		89		231		245	

*Hoppe, Die kleine Anfrage im Deutschen Reichstage, p. 72.

Kleine Anfrage is the German equivalent of the question in the English House of Commons. The interpellation is sometimes referred to in Germany as Grosse Anfrage. Die kleine Anfrage would mean literally the short question and would distinguish the question from the interpellation, or long question.

TABLE 7

Kleine Anfragen*

	1919		1920		1921		1922	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Deutschnationale Volkspartei</u>	166	26	268	30	240	33	197	31
<u>Deutsche Volkspartei</u>	148	23	236	27	187	26	182	29
<u>Deutsche Demokratische Partei</u>	118	18	83	9	64	9	80	13
<u>Zentrum**</u>	88	14	93	11	24	3	23	4
<u>Bayrische Volkspartei**</u>					25	3	11	2
<u>Sozialdemokraten (SPD)</u>	73	11	100	11	69	10	57	9
<u>Unabhängige (Ind.) Sozialdemokraten</u>	30	5	67	8	58	8	9	2
<u>Kommunisten</u>			5	1	46	6	54	9
<u>Bayrische Bauernbund</u>			2	0.2	1	0.1		
<u>Deutsche-Hannoveraner</u>	5	1	13	2	8	1	4	1
Several parties	16	3	23	3	11	2	17	3
TOTAL	644		890		733		634	

*Hoppe, op. cit., p. 73.

**The Bayrische Volkspartei and the Zentrum were united during the years 1919 and 1920.

TABLE 8

Kleine Anfragen*

	Number of questions										
	1923	-24	-25	-26	-27	-28	-29	-30	-31	-32	-33
<u>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</u> (Nazis)		16	9	39	6	8	3	6	29	12	
<u>Deutschnationale Volkspartei</u> (Nationalist Party)	42	40	42	34	6	2	11	12	1	0	
<u>Deutsche Demokratische Partei</u> (Democrats)	2	3	13	10	14	6	2	2			
<u>Staatspartei**</u> (State Party)									1	2	
<u>Deutsche Volkspartei</u> (Peoples' Party)	24	12	11	4	7	2	1	2	1	0	
<u>Zentrum</u> (Catholic)	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<u>Bayrische Volkspartei</u> (Bavarian Catholic)	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<u>Wirtschaftliche Vereinigung</u> (Economic Union)		1	8	0	4	1	4 ^x	1	3	0	
<u>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</u> (Socialist)	14	11	19	16	2	2	2	0	1	1	
<u>Kommunisten</u> (Communist)	22	6	2	7	7	4	7	3	5	2	
<u>Volksrechtspartei</u> (The Peoples' Rights Party)								1			
<u>Deutsche Landvolk</u> (German farm folk)									1		
<u>Christliche Sozialer Verein</u> (Christian Social Movement)								4	2	2	
<u>Nicht Erledigt</u> (Unanswered)						2 ^{xx}	2	1 ^{xx}	2	1	
TOTAL	110	93	107	113	46	27	30	32	44	19	0

*See Hoppe, op. cit., p. 71. For years 1929 to 1933 inc. the data were secured from the Archives of the Reichstag.

**The German Democrats became the State Party in 1931.

^xOne of these four questions was given oral answer under the provisions of Section 62 of the Rules, as amended in 1929.

^{xx}These two numbers are added to the total, since the party affiliation of the members asking the questions was not recorded. Other unanswered questions (Nicht Erledigt) are not included in the totals.

TABLE 9

Kleine Anfragen*

	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929**
<u>Auswärtiges Amt</u> (Foreign Office)	7	11	16	5	4	2	1
<u>Reichsfinanzministerium</u> (Ministry of Finance)	19	20	20	27	6	2	3
<u>Reichs ernährungsministerium</u> (Ministry for Relief)	14	6	6	4	0	2	2
<u>Reichsinnerministerium</u> (Ministry of the Interior)	29	13	17	26	7	6	4
<u>Reichsarbeitsministerium</u> (Ministry of Labor)	6	7	14	15	8	5	5
<u>Reichswehrministerium</u> (Ministry of Defense)	8	3	3	4	4	1	1
<u>Reichsverkehrsministerium</u> (Ministry of Communications)	8	12	11	8	6	3	3
<u>Reichspostministerium</u> (Postal Ministry)	2	1	6	4	0	0	2
<u>Reichsjustizministerium</u> (Ministry of Justice)	6	4	5	11	3	0	2
<u>Reichsschatzministerium</u> (Ministry for Reich treasures)	2 (Dissolved March 31, 1923)						
<u>Reichsminister für Wiederaufbau</u> (Minister for Reconstruction)	2 (Dissolved May 11, 1924)						
<u>Reichskanzler</u> (Chancellor)	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
<u>Auswärtiges Amt und Arbeitsministerium</u> (jointly to Foreign Office & Labor Ministry)					1		
<u>Arbeits- und Finanzministerium</u> (jointly to Ministries for Labor and Finance)					1		
<u>Reichsminister für den besetzten Gebiete</u> (Minister for occupied territories)	2	6	6	2	2	1	0
<u>Nicht Erledigt</u> (Unanswered)						2	
<u>Reichswirtschaftsministerium</u> (Ministry of Economics)	7	7	2	7	4	3	3

*Hoppe, op. cit., p. 73

**To December 1, 1929.

TABLE 10

WRITTEN QUESTIONS, 1909 to 1933*

July 5, 1909 to the end of the ninth legislative period in 1910--	217	<u>13. Législature (1924-28)</u>	S. O. 1924	1009
<u>10. Législature (1910-14)</u>	5424		S. E. 1924	1235
<u>11. Législature (1914-19)</u>			S. O. 1925	2787
S. O. 1914	362		S. E. 1925	1337
1915	6897		S. O. 1926	3117
1916	6269		S. E. 1926	991
1917	6278		S. O. 1927	3148
1918	6107		S. E. 1927	914
S. O. 1919	5221		<u>S. O. 1928</u>	<u>1392</u>
TOTAL	31,134	<u>14. Législature (1928-32)</u>	TOTAL	15,930
<u>12. Législature (1919-24)</u>			S. O. 1928	791
S. E. 1919	253		S. E. 1928	1421
S. O. 1920	4364		S. O. 1929	3273
S. E. 1920	1940		S. E. 1929	1469
S. O. 1921	3567		S. O. 1930	2882
S. E. 1921	1577		S. E. 1930	1250
S. O. 1922	2861		S. O. 1931	2162
S. E. 1922	1598		S. E. 1931	1437
S. O. 1923	2582		<u>S. O. 1932</u>	<u>1320</u>
S. E. 1923	1217	<u>15. Législature</u>	TOTAL	16,005
S. O. 1924	1551		S. O. 1932	757
TOTAL	21,510		S. E. 1932	1585
			S. O. 1933	2894
			S. E. 1933**	1190
			<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>6,426</u>

GRAND TOTAL (1909 to 1933) 96,646

*The information for this table was obtained from Tables des matières, 1924-28, Annales, Chambre des Députés, and from the Journal officiel, Débats, Chambre des Députés. The letters S. O. stand for session ordinaire, and the letters S. E. for session extraordinaire.

**The questions for the session extraordinaire of 1933 are to December 2, 1933 only.

TABLE 11

WRITTEN QUESTIONS*
1928

CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES PARTY	Number of Members**	Number of Questions
Communist	13	48
Socialist	100	321
Republican and French Socialists	13	52
Radical-Socialist	125	252
Republican Socialists	18	25
Left Radical	53	109
Independents of the Left	14	31
Republicans of the Left	64	140
Unionist and Social Left	18	31
Popular Democrats	19	55
Republican Democratic Union	102	189
Democratic and Social Action	29	74
No party (<u>non-inscrits</u>)	38	96
TOTAL	606	1423

*The questions are those for the session extraordinaire of 1928. The tabulation is by Norman Currin, who made the analysis while a graduate student at the University of Michigan for Professor J. R. Hayden.

**Only 379 of the 606 Deputies asked questions.

TABLE 12
WRITTEN QUESTIONS*

SUBJECT	1926		1928	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Finance	225	42.9	560	39.3
War	93	18.0	239	16.8
Public Instruction	23	4.4	130	9.1
Interior	20	3.9	54	3.8
Foreign Affairs	7	1.4	7	.5
Agriculture	10	1.9	32	2.0
Air			4	.33
Colonies	10	1.9	21	1.4
Commerce and Industry	23	4.4	48	3.4
Justice	33	6.4	76	5.3
Pensions	30	5.8	72	5.0
Labor and Health	12	2.3	88	6.2
Public Works	26	5.0	75	5.2
Put to Premier			2	.1
TOTAL	518		1423	

*The data for 1928 are taken from a report prepared for Professor J. R. Hayden by Norman Currin while a graduate student at the University of Michigan in 1932. Those for 1926 are from a similar report by Dwight C. Long, in 1928.

All of the questions for the session extraordinaire of 1928 were tabulated by Mr. Currin. The 1423 questions were asked by 379 Deputies.

The questions for 1926 are for ten days selected at random.

Analyzing the subject matter by larger subject groupings, Mr. Currin found 579 questions (41.9 per cent) concerned with the civil service, 310 (21.8 per cent) concerned with taxes, and 179 (12.4 per cent) concerned with the pensions.

TABLE 13

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

January 24 to August 28, 1860*

	Questions	Supplemen- taries	Total	Percent
Foreign Affairs	92	7	99	17
Army	68	11	79	14
Chancellor of the Exchequer	52	14	66	12
Home Affairs	60	5	65	11
India	41	2	43	8
Ireland	40	0	40	7
Prime Minister (largely foreign affairs)	31	3	34	6
Navy	26	1	27	5
Post Office	21	0	21	4
Board of Trade	19	0	19	3
Works	16	3	19	3
Colonies	12	2	14	2
Lord Advocate	9	0	9	1.6
Poor Relief	9	0	9	1.6
To private members	9	0	9	1.6
Attorney General	7	0	7	1.2
Business of the House	5	0	5	.9
Education	2	0	2	.4
Judge Advocate General	1	0	1	.2
Total	520	48	568	

*This information was collected by Mrs. M. B. Fox from Hansard for 1860.

TABLE 14

QUESTIONS ANSWERED ORALLY*

Session 1929-30

	Private Notice	Oral Answer (Starred)	Supplementary	Oral Answer TOTAL	Percent
Foreign Affairs (non-Russian)	9	644	709	1362	6.6
Russian Affairs	3	543	889	1435	7.4
Labor (hours, wages, etc.)	4	227	254	485	2.65
Unemployment (insurance, etc.)	1	856	921	1778	8.6
Poor relief		119	131	250	1.2
Colonies	11	460	496	967	4.7
India and Indian Affairs	10	483	434	927	4.5
Dominion Affairs	5	210	247	462	2.2
Empire Marketing Board		54	87	141	.7
Army		189	244	433	2.1
Navy	6	402	458	866	4.2
Air (military & commercial)	4	149	171	324	1.6
Trade and commerce	2	380	450	832	4.0
Tariffs (dumping, etc.)		214	374	588	2.8
Agriculture	3	393	503	899	4.3
Fishing		90	152	242	1.2
Education		418	409	827	4.0
Scotland, miscellaneous	3	334	478	815	3.9
Business of the House	8	279	494	781	3.8
Industry (economic problems, corporations, etc.)	6	333	445	784	3.6
Home affairs (prisons, courts, immigration, etc.)	3	338	397	738	3.6
Transport (railways & roads)	1	317	353	671	3.25
Public Works (parks, monuments, buildings)	2	305	346	653	3.2
Pensions, health insurance, old age insurance		281	301	582	2.8
Health and sanitation		290	251	541	2.6
Civil Service		246	270	516	2.5
Housing, (slum clearance, etc.)	1	160	191	352	1.7
Taxation, national		134	123	257	1.25
Local rates	1	41	36	78	.4
Post Office (telephone, telegraph, radio)		112	147	259	1.25
Debt (internal, external, and reparations)	2	95	106	203	1.0
Cabinet and ministry		64	94	158	.8
Metropolitan Police	1	46	56	103	.5
Electricity Supply		44	35	79	.4
Miscellaneous (local gov't., electoral reform, etc.)	2	116	132	250	1.2
TOTAL	88	9366	11184	20638	

*This information was taken from the Parliamentary Debates, Vols. 229-243, June 25, 1929 to August 1, 1930. This chart is printed in the American Political Science Review, Vol. 27, p. 973, December, 1933, in my article "Question Time in the British House of Commons."

TABLE 15

ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS*
Including supplementary questions

	28-29	1928	1927	1926	24-25
Foreign Affairs, Sec. of State	316	435	662	605	679
Under Sec. of State	243	239	458	308	425
Labour, Minister	547	331	482	421	807
Parl. Sec.	348	484	291	327	351
Health, Minister	497	552	681	529	626
Parl. Sec.	301	395	457	533	471
Prime Minister	225	242	350	388	729
Board of Trade, President	334	375	490	463	674
Parl. Sec.	158	239	264	179	168
Overseas Trade, Sec. to	94	68	197	238	336
Home Affairs, Sec. of State	535	773	836	940	853
Under Sec. of State	150	169	258	343	61
India, Under Sec. of State	316	277	521	288	364
Treasury, Chancellor of Excheq.	344	262	547	419	543
Financial Sec.	266	431	246	288	329
Dominions & Colonies, Sec. of St.	430	638	528	556	333
Colonies, Under Sec. of St.	145	60	322	130	395
Agriculture, Minister	261	339	441	462	657
Board of Education, President	229	159	264	240	289
Parl. Sec.	13	28	91	56	
Transport, Minister	360	418	596	510	416
Parl. Sec.					41
Admiralty, First Lord	87	153	136	168	221
Parl. Sec.	179	190	303	263	310
Scotland, Sec. of State	252	308	357	269	344
Under Sec. of State		50	80	27	
War, Sec. of State	170	166	282	269	292
Financial Sec.	39	66		120	193
Air, Sec. of State	82	141	172	141	130
Under Sec. of State	52	57	187	79	88
Postmaster-General	230	228	285	225	163
Ass't. Postmaster-General	111	91	138	154	84
Pensions, Minister	117	156	154	178	342
Parl. Sec.	35	50	52	32	191
Mines, Secretary for	284	353	290	385	234
Attorney-General		20	24	51	59
Lord Advocate	28	35	25		
Lords of the Treasury (Whips)	24	63	39	44	
Forestry Commissioner		39	46		
Lords of the Household			81	106	110
TOTAL	7,892	9,080	11,633	11,095	12,367

*Tables Nos. 15 and 16 are based on data published by James Howarth in his Parliamentary Gazette, January, 1926, p. 161; February, 1927, p. 106; February, 1928, p. 116; October, 1928, p. 115; May, 1929, p. 109; September, 1930, p. 128; September, 1931 (does not include questions asked after the fall of the Labour Government in August); December, 1932, p. 93; February, 1934, p. 120.

ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS*
Including supplementary questions

	1929-30	1930-31	1931-32	1932-33
Foreign Affairs, Sec. of State,	1482	835	464	395
Under Sec. of State	177	423	523	313
Labour, Minister	1064	1050	720	569
Parl. Sec.	130	202	279	271
Health, Minister	1036	838	475	498
Parl. Sec.	113	225	33	208
Prime Minister	1018	626	397	349
Board of Trade, Pres.	988	1190	611	502
Parl. Sec.	166	271	46	339
Overseas Trade, Sec. to	479	500	455	331
Home Affairs, Sec. of State	891	607	1130	523
Under Sec. of State	146	214	81	107
India, Sec. of State	717	979	595	411
Under Sec. of State			10	157
Treasury, Chancellor of Excheq.	715	534	473	282
Financial Sec.	359	612		556
Dominions, Sec. of State**	675	294		338
Under Sec. of State	399	78	24	42
Colonies, Sec. of State			289	403
Under. Sec. of State	524	454		
Agriculture, Minister	601	649	770	491
Parl. Sec.	262			
Board of Education, Pres	599			
Parl. Sec.	37	64	88	109
Transport, Minister	576	622	509	295
Parl. Sec.			42	123
Admiralty, First Lord	552	360	120	96
Parl. Sec.	151	206	178	32
Civil Lord	95	29	25	23
Works, First Commissioner	347	271	134	110
Scotland, Sec. of State	327	178	25	204
Under Sec. of State	300	150	145	191
War, Sec. of State	317	285		
Financial Sec.		27	246	170
Air, U. Sec. of State	270	282	176	135
Postmaster-General	207	289	263	158
Ass't. Postmaster-Gen.	26	104	84	45
Pensions, Minister	166	71	47	69
Mines, Sec. for	97	497	301	371
Parl. Sec.	87	1		
Solicitor-General	41	12	20	17
for Scotland			3	
Attorney-General	20	29	45	15
Lord Advocate		34	3	16
Parl. Sec. to the Treasury	9	20	16	30
Lords of the Treasury (Whips)	77	215	89	97
Charity Commissioner	30	22		
Chancellor, Duchy of Lancaster	14	150		
Forestry Commissioner				19
Lords of the Household			37	37
Church Estates Commissioners			38	26
Lord President of the Council				261
Kitchen Committee				5
Dr. Morris-Jones			45	
TOTAL	16,287	14,499	10,054	9,539

*See the note at the end of the previous table. (No. 15).

**For 1929-30 the figure includes questions for J. H. Thomas who was Lord Privy Seal until June, 1930 when he became Secretary of State for Dominions. Most of the questions listed here were put to Thomas before he became Secretary of State.

TABLE 17

QUESTIONS TO WHICH WRITTEN ANSWER WAS GIVEN*

	1928-29	1928	1927	1926	1924-25
Health, Minister	317	357	309	449	595
Parl. Sec.	80	79	91	76	171
Labour, Minister	174	55	133	185	297
Parl. Sec.	180	185	130	95	205
Transport, Minister	185	126	170	207	284
Parl. Sec.					26
Home Affairs, Sec. of State	152	178	226	207	290
Under Sec. of State	48	36	51	73	26
Treasury, Chancellor of Excheq.	89	56	91	104	229
Financial Sec.	201	183		318	175
Postmaster-General	121	69	131	107	247
Ass't. Postmaster-General	73		50	111	62
Agriculture, Minister	122	96	120	184	387
Board of Trade, President	94	59	106	128	161
Parl. Sec.	118	83	72	55	141
Overseas Trade, Secretary to	32	23	71	95	157
Scotland, Sec. of State	104	104	121	111	143
Admiralty, First Lord	30	29	36	53	50
Parl. Sec.	99	90	145	141	284
War, Sec. of State	84	61	87	150	213
Financial Sec.	15		35	48	64
Foreign Affairs, Sec. of State	37	54	88	83	148
Under Sec. of State	52	44	104	60	128
Board of Education, President	91	56	101	95	224
Air, Sec. of State	86	52	137	116	153
India, Under Sec. of State	71	98	211	173	144
Mines, Secretary for	83	56	65	84	131
Dominions & Col., Sec. of State	118	141	102	175	134
Colonies, U. Sec. of State	19		63		51
Pensions, Minister	40	57	42	51	201
Parl. Sec.	11				53
Prime Minister	13	19	43	37	58
Attorney-General	11			19	44
Forestry Commissioner			28		
TOTAL	2950	2446	3159	3790	5741
Unstarred questions**	1667	1506	1987	2449	3353
Starred questions ans. in writing	1283	940	1172	1341	2388

*Tables Nos. 17 and 18 are based on data published by James Howarth in his Parliamentary Gazette, January, 1926, p. 156; February, 1927, p. 108; February, 1928, p. 115; October, 1928, p. 117; May, 1929, p. 106; September, 1930, p. 123; September, 1931 (does not include questions asked after the fall of the Labour Government in August, 1931); December, 1932, p. 96; February, 1934, p. 123.

**See Table No. 3 .

TABLE 18

QUESTIONS TO WHICH WRITTEN ANSWER WAS GIVEN*

	1929-30	1930-31	1931-32	1932-33
Health, Minister	795	449	219	164
Parl. Sec.	155	78	10	18
Labour, Minister	636	314	129	150
Parl. Sec.	196	99	63	22
Transport, Minister	511	261	138	80
Parl. Sec.				8
Home Affairs, Sec. of State	380	195	178	315
Under Sec. of State	82	51	9	9
Treasury, Chancellor of Exchequer	299	115	76	43
Financial Secretary	341	222	154	140
Postmaster-General	461	162	64	54
Ass't. Postmaster-General	31	73		
Agriculture, Minister	172	251	195	84
Board of Trade, President	361	211	101	71
Parl. Sec.	224	130	20	75
Overseas Trade, Secretary to	123	105	73	51
Scotland, Sec. of State	329	166	54	69
Under Sec. of State	32	7		
Admiralty, First Lord	144	148	35	41
Parl. Sec.	161	90	47	10
Civil Lord	54	12	8	
War, Sec. of State	235	160		
Financial Secretary		12	76	38
Foreign Affairs, Sec. of State	213	109	50	42
Under Sec. of State	68	49	71	47
Board of Education, President	237			
Parl. Sec.	11	12	19	67
Air, Under Sec. of State			52	19
India, Sec. of State	355	157	100	121
Under Sec. of State	152	89		
Mines, Secretary for	50	138	78	47
Parl. Sec.	216	7		
Dominions, Sec. of State#	217	43	28	19
Under Sec. of State	183	27	3	
Colonies, Sec. of State			61	86
Under Sec. of State	214	92		
Works, First Commissioner	176	68	20	14
Pensions, Minister	113	68	18	21
Prime Minister	68	32	11	11
Attorney-General	29	24		8
Lord Advocate		10		
Solicitor-General	6	2		
Duchy of Lancaster, Chancellor	4	81		
Treasury, Lords of (Whips)	4	13		3
Church Estates Commissioners		21	4	
Charity Commissioner		3		
Lord President of the Council			14	11
Dr. Morris-Jones			6	
TOTAL	8039	4356**	2184	1958
Unstarred questions***	4420	2767	1398	1017
Starred questions ans. in writing	3619	1589**	786	941

*See the note at the bottom of the previous table (No. 17).

**The figures for 1930-31 are only until the fall of the Labour Government in August, 1931. Therefore the estimate of the number of starred questions given written answer is too low.

***See Table No. 3.

†Questions put to him during the Session.

#J. H. Thomas was Dominions Secretary only after June, 1930; this includes all/

TABLE 19

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER*
Including supplementary questions

	1929-30	1928-29	1928	1927	1926	1924-25
Mr. Harry Day, Lab	847	483	489	937	611	493
Sir Kingsley Wood, C	844	Parliamentary Secretary to Ministry of Health				
Lieut. Com. Kenworthy, Lab	642	698	836	919	662	714
Sir N. Grattan-Doyle, C	421	108	85	25	mem.**	mem.**
Col. Howard-Bury, C	416	116	159	156	mem.**	—
Mr. A. M. Samuel, C	400	Financial Secretary to the Treasury				
Mr. Hore-Belisha, Lib	382	158	232	198	268	319
Mr. Patrick J. Hannon, C	288	66	85	82	57	109
Mr. Charles Williams, C	276	mem.**	mem.**	mem.**	mem.**	mem.**
Mr. Waldron Smithers, C	269	mem.**	mem.**	mem.**	21	mem.**
Sir Frederick Hall, C	266	51	171	178	248	156
Cap. Peter MacDonald, C	259	mem.**	mem.**	mem.**	28	mem.**
Mr. Douglas Hacking, C	257	Secretary for Overseas Trade				
Cap. Henry Crookshank, C	256	44	66	42	70	mem.**
Mr. James Albery, C	237	mem.**	24	28	31	mem.**
Mr. Ernest Thurtle, Lab	216	252	192	336	230	231
Mr. William Davison, C	214	43	106	150	155	170
Earl Winterton, C	204	Under Secretary of State for India				
Mr. Percy Harris, Lib	178	65	124	258	114	149
Commander C. W. Bellairs, C	175	90	73	75	77	88
Dr. Vernon Davies, C	173	56	42	67	mem.**	mem.**
Col. J. C. Wedgwood, Lab	165	260	212	338	186	207
Mr. Ernest Brown, Lib	161	64	145	170	—	—
Sir Austen Chamberlain, C	154	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs				
Mr. George Buchanan, Ind Lab	152	148	224	178	109	133
Mr. William T. Kelly, Lab	150	315	377	189	98	mem.**
Cap. Anthony Eden, C	148	mem.**	mem.**	mem.**	mem.**	mem.**
Mr. Neil Maclean, Lab	138	142	235	55	270	271
Sir Archibald Sinclair Lib	136	56	mem.**	96	87	53
Mr. Percy A. Hurd, C	130	62	107	97	109	124
Mr. Stanley Baldwin, C	129	Prime Minister				
Viscountess Astor, C	128	54	77	81	55	91
Rev. Campbell Stephen, Lab	123	87	117	144	50	169
Mr. John Beckett, Lab	120	79	23	140	81	189
Mr. Winston Churchill, C	115	Chancellor of the Exchequer				
Mr. W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, C	113	First Commissioner of Works				
Sir Robert Thomas, Lib	—	254	321	124	mem.**	mem.**
Mr. Shinwell, Lab (Sec. Mines)	—	209	139	—	—	—
Mr. Tom Williams, Lab	50	199	304	325	276	173
Mr. Lansbury, Lab (Comm. Works)	—	121	153	192	217	289
Mr. R. MacDonald, Lab (Prime Min.)	—	24	mem.**	21	62	59
Mr. J. H. Thomas, Lab (Sec. Domin.)	—	34	mem.**	39	32	mem.**
Mr. Ponsonby, Lab	—	13	mem.**	36	54	58
Mr. Lunn, Lab (U. Sec. Domin.)	—	58	43	73	mem.**	mem.**
Cap. Wedgwood Benn (Sec. India)***	—	90	mem.**	—	158	491

*This table is based on data published by James Howarth in his Parliamentary Gazette, January, 1926, pp. 161-2; February, 1927, pp. 106-7; February, 1928, pp. 116-7; October, 1928, pp. 115-6, May; 1929, pp. 109-10; September, 1930, pp. 128-30. Gazette also lists written answers

**The notation mem. indicates that M.P. did not ask enough questions to be listed—less than 20; in 1924-25 less than 50; in 1928-29 less than 10.

***Cap. Benn was a Liberal in 1924-1926, but a member of the Labour Party after 1928.

TABLE 20

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER*
Including supplementary questions

	1929-30	1930-31	1931-32	1932-33
Mr. Harry Day, Lab	847	600	---	---
Sir Kingsley Wood, C	844	775	Postmaster-General	
Lieut. Com. Kenworthy, Lab.	642	631	---	---
Sir N. Grattan-Doyle, C	421	364	84	70
Col. Howard-Bury, C	416	230	---	---
Mr. Mander, Lib	413	380	332	347
Mr. A. M. Samuel, C	400	297	200	102
Mr. Hore-Belisha, Lib	382	208	Finan. Sec. to Treas.	
Mr. Patrick J. Hannon, C	288	351	261	150
Mr. Charles Williams, C	276	414	42	84
Mr. Waldron Smithers, C	269	289	79	59
Sir Frederick Hall, C	266	306	---	---
Captain Peter MacDonald, C	259	359	307	213
Mr. Douglas Hacking, C	257	388	mem.**	Under Sec.
Captain Henry Crookshank, C	256	119	46	35
Mr. James Albery, C	237	232	37	5
Mr. Tom Williams, Lab	50	25	607	573
Mr. David Kirkwood, Lab.	95	152	317	193
Mr. James Maxton, Ind Lab	24	27	310	246
Mr. Buchanan (George) Ind Lab	152	61	258	109
Mr. Rhys Davies, Lab	mem.**	mem.**	253	192
Col. J. C. Wedgwood, Lab	165	mem.**	252	198
Mr. George Lansbury, Lab	Comm. of Works		250	288
Sir William Davison, C	214	272	241	180
Mr. David Grenfel, Lab	mem.**	mem.**	188	288
Mr. Will Thorne, Lab	93	98	210	233
Mr. John J. Lawson, Lab	Parl. Sec. Lab.		224	197
Sir Alfred Knox, C	93	124	207	126
Mr. Herbert Williams, C	---	---	86	193
Mr. William Lunn, Lab	U. Sec. Domin.		116	143
Mr. John MacGovern, Ind Lab	mem.**	49	210	101
Sir J. S. Wardlaw-Milne, C	227	72	127	77
Mr. Peter Freeman, Lab	214	344	---	---
Mr. Edward Marjoribanks, C	206	224	---	---
Earl Winterton, C	204	155	mem.**	mem.**
Sir Percy Harris, Lib	178	34	125	52
Commander C. W. Bellairs, C	175	194	---	---
Dr. Vernon Davies, C	173	---	---	---
Major Graham Pole, Lab	162	86	---	---
Mr. Ernest Brown, Lib Nat	161	100	Sec. for Mines	
Sir Austen Chamberlain, C	154	102	mem.**	17
Captain Anthony Eden, C	148	39	U. Sec. For. Affairs	
Mr. Percy A. Hurd, C	130	62	53	46
Mr. Stanley Baldwin, C	129	119	Lord Pres. Council	
Viscountess Astor, C	128	131	108	86
Mr. Winston Churchill, C	115	mem.**	mem.**	32
Major David Colville, C	115	114	Sec. Overseas Trade	
Mr. W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, C	113	54	Commissioner Works	

*This table is based on data published by James Howarth in his Parliamentary Gazette, September, 1930, pp. 123-4; September, 1931 (does not include questions asked after the fall of the Labour Government in August); December, 1932, pp. 93-5; February, 1934, pp. 120-3.

**The notation mem. indicates that he was a M.P. but asked less than 20 (in 1932-33, 5) questions.

TABLE 21
SPECIALIZATION
1929-30*

NAME	SUBJECT of specialization	QUESTIONS**	
		No. on subject	Total No.
Stanley Baldwin, C., Leader of the Opposition	Business of the House	116	144
Sir Austen Chamberlain, C., former Sec. of State for Foreign Aff.	Business of the House	56	151
Commander Bellairs, C., naval experience	Russia and Communism Foreign Affairs	39 15	162
Captain Henry Crookshank, C., army experience	Russia and Communism Foreign Affairs	61 27	250
Alexander Haycock, Lab.	Russia and Communism	16	49
Godfrey Locker-Lampson, C., former Under Sec. of State for Foreign Aff.	Russia and Communism Foreign Affairs	34 12	66
Edward Marjoribanks, C.	Russia and Communism Foreign Affairs	73 9	200
Walter Guinness, C., former Minister of Agriculture	Agriculture	16	27
Viscount Wolmer, C., former Ass't. Postmaster-General	Agriculture	41	92
James Blindell, L.	Agriculture	16	27
William B. Taylor, Lab.	Agriculture	30	74
Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, C., former Minister of Labour	Labor and Unemployment	42	76
George Buchanan, Lab., Labor leader	Labor and Unemployment	69	148
Captain Sir George Bowyer, C., Conservative Whip	Labor and Unemployment	22	60
Major Walter Elliot, C., former Under Sec. of State for Scotland	Scotland	13	27
Adam S. McKinlay, Lab.	Scotland	33	46
George Hardie, Lab.	Scotland	32	67
Major Sir Archibald Sinclair, L.	Scotland	65	138

TABLE 21
(Continued)
SPECIALIZATION

1929-30*

NAME	SUBJECT of specialization	QUESTIONS**	
		No. on subject	Total No.
George C. Train, C.	Scotland	26	34
Major David Graham Pole, Lab., Sec. of Brit. Comm. on Indian Affairs London correspondent for Indian Press	India	136	173
Earl Winterton, C., former Sec. of State for India	India	51	181
John S. Wardlaw-Milne, C., manu- facturer, once in Indian Gov't., lecturer in U.S.	India	62	226
Fenner Brockway, Lab.	India	44	89
Major Sir Bertram G. Falle, C., army experience, also previously in the Colonial Service	Navy	70	106
Colonel Josiah C. Wedgwood, Lab., naval architect, served in Army and Navy	Colonial problems	80	161
Colonel Charles K. Howard-Bury, C.	Colonial problems	75	389
Dr. Vernon Davies, C.	Education	69	129
Brig.-General Sir Henry P. Croft, C.	Tariffs and dumping	36	88
	1932***		
Geoffry Mander, L.	Foreign Affairs Trade	17 11	46
Sir A. M. Samuel, C.	Foreign Affairs	13	28
Brig.-General Clifton Brown, C.	Foreign Affairs & Dominions	11	17
D. R. Grenfell, Lab., former Parl. Sec. to the Board of Ed.	Foreign Affairs	16	21

*Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons, this compilation was made by the author from Vols. 229-243 covering the 1929-30 session (June 25, 1929 to August 1, 1930).

**Oral-answer questions including both starred questions and supplementary questions.

***Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons, this compilation was made by William Carter Lucas covering the months of May and June, 1932. He was at the time a student of the late Prof. J. R. Hayden at the University of Michigan.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
MOTIONS FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE*
Under Standing Order No. 8**

Session	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
1882						4
1883						5
1884						9
1885						4
1886						4
1882-86	3	18	1	3	1	26
1887						11
1888		10				10
1889		7				7
1890		6				6
1890-91		4		1		5
1892		3				3
1893-94		16		4		20
1894		4		1		5
1895 (Sess. 1&2)		2				2
1896	2	4				6
1897	3	4				7
1898	2	3				5
1899		5				5
1900		6				6
1901						9
1902	3	10		1		14
1903	2	1				3
1904	1	6				7
1905	1	8				8
1906	5					5
1907	2	1				3
1908	2					2
1909	1			1		2
1910						0
1911		1				1
1912-13	3	1		2		6
1913	3			1		4
Total 1882-1913	33	120	1	14	1	

*Key: I Leave given without members rising in their places, II Leave given by more than 40 members rising in their places, III Leave given by a favorable division after support by less than 40 but more than 10 members, IV Leave refused by less than 40 members rising, V Leave refused by Speaker.

See Parliamentary Papers: 1887, LXVI; 1890, LVII; 1890-91, LXII; 1892, LXIII; 1894, LXVIII; 1895, LXXIX; 1896, LXVII; 1897, LXXII; 1898, LXXII; 1899, LXXVII; 1900, LXVII (No. 329); 1902, LXXXII (No. 391); 1903, LIV (No. 318); 1904, LXXVIII (No. 302); 1905, LXII (No. 287); 1906, XCIV (No. 382); 1907, LXVI (No. 322); 1908, LXXXVII (No. 360); 1909, LXX (No. 301); 1910, LXXIII (No. 328); 1911, LXI (No. 330); 1912-13, LXVII (No. 502); 1913, LI (No. 264).

**Standing Order No. 8 was originally No. 9 when it was adopted in 1882. In 1888 it became No. 17. In 1902 it became No. 10.

TABLE 22
(Continued)

HOUSE OF COMMONS
MOTIONS FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE*
Under Standing Order No. 8**
(Continued)

Session	I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL***
1914	3					3
1914-16						0
1916	8			3		11
1917-18	6	2	3	4		15
1918	2	2		1		5
1919	2	4		3	2	9
1920	5	8		6		19
1921(Sess.1&2)	3	3		2	4	8
1922(Sess.1&2)	3			1	4	4
1923	1	1			2	2
1924	1	1			5	2
1924-25					2	0
1926					4	0
1927						0
1928	2					2
1928-29					4	0
1929-30		2		1	2	3
1930-31		1			4	1
1931-32					6	0
1932-33					7	0
1933-34		1			1	1
1934-35					4	0
1935-36					2	1
1936-37					2	2
1937-38					1	2
1938-39					4	0
1939-40						0
1940-41						0
1941-42						0
1942-43						0
1943-44						0
1944-45						1
1945-46						---
Total						
1914-1946	36	25	3	21	60***	91
Total						
1882-1946	69	145	4	35		306

*Key: I Leave given without members rising in their places, II Leave given by more than 40 members rising in their places, III Leave given by a favorable division after support by less than 40 but more than 10 members, IV Leave refused by less than 40 members rising, V Motion refused by the Speaker as determined from Decisions of the Chair (1933), pp. 12-21 and Parl. Deb. 5s., Commons, passim, for the years 1919 to 1939 only.

See Parliamentary Papers: 1914, LXV (No. 426); 1917-18, XXV (No. 181); 1918, XIX (no. 133); 1919, XL (No. 235); 1920, XXXVIII (No. 251); 1921, XXVIII (No. 232); 1922, Session II, III (No. 14); 1923, XIX (No. 136); 1924, XIII (No. 8); 1924-25, XXII (No. 202); 1928, XIX (No. 122); 1928-29, XVI (No. 115); 1930-31, VII (Nos. 4 & 157). The data for 1931-32 and 1932-33 were furnished by W. J. Pusey; 1933-34 to 1938-39 by the late J. W. C. Beesley; 1939-40 to 1945-46 by E. G. C. Weatherley.

TABLE 22 Continued

Additional notes to data on S. O. 8 1914 to 1946

**Standing Order No. 8 was originally No. 9 when it was adopted in 1882. In 1888 it became No. 17. In 1902 it became No. 10. In 1933 it assumed its present No., namely: No. 8.

***The total column to the right does not include the number in Column "V", because these were not included in the official reports. These 60 cases of refusal of the Motion to Adjourn under Standing Order No. 8 were extracted as indicated in the note (*) above. The data under column "V" are for calendar years, in the case of hyphenated session years the data are for the latter of the two years.

TABLE 24

DISPOSITION OF INTERPELLATIONS 1924-28*

	1924	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	TOTAL
	SO	SE	SO	SE	SO	SE	SO	SE	SO**	
No action	23	37	19	77	109	7	39	36	10	357
Withdrawn	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	6
Adjourned	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	4
Discussion of date	15	9	26	7	15	11	7	4	4	98
Discussion of date and indefinite adjournment	2	9	19	2	16	9	34	6	8	105
Discussion of date and withdrawal	0	6	2	2	8	2	4	1	3	28
Junction with <u>loi</u>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Debate without closing resolution	0	0	1	0	11	0	1	7	0	20
Debate closed by <u>Ordre du jour pur et simple</u>	0	0	1	0	2	0	6	0	2	11
Debate closed by <u>Ordre du jour motivé</u>	21	7	23	13	8	2	13	8	8	103
Discussion of date followed by <u>ordre pur et simple</u>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	4
Discussion of date followed by <u>ordre du jour motivé</u>	0	0	6	12	15	62	8	4	0	107
TOTAL	62	70	98	114	186	93	115	69	37	844

*The data for this table were taken from Table des matières, 1924-28, Annales, Chambre des Députés.

**SO indicates session ordinaire; SE, session extraordinaire.

TABLE 25

DISPOSITION OF INTERPELLATIONS 1924-28*

	A**	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	TOTAL
No action	5	65	9	46	50	40	26	3	113	357
Withdrawn	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	6
Adjourned	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4
Discussion of date	0	31	19	4	13	4	1	0	26	98
Discussion of date and indefinite adjournment	0	23	7	2	1	13	0	0	59	105
Discussion of date and withdrawal	0	7	1	2	6	1	1	0	10	28
Junction with <u>loi</u>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Debate without closing resolution	0	1	0	0	0	5	6	0	8	20
Debate closed by <u>ordre du jour pur et simple</u>	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	8	11
Debate closed by <u>ordre du jour motivé</u>	0	40	11	0	19	2	0	0	31	103
Discussion of date followed by <u>ordre pur et simple</u>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	4
Discussion of date followed by <u>ordre du jour motivé</u>	0	4	2	9	3	0	10	5	74	107
TOTAL	6	174	50	63	93	68	45	8	337	844

*The data for this table were taken from Table des matières, 1924-28, Annales, Chambre des Députés.

**Key--Cabinets of--

- A François-Marsal, June 9-14, 1924.
- B 1st Herriot, June 14, 1924 to April 17, 1925.
- C 2nd Painlevé, April 17 to October 29, 1925.
- D 3rd Painlevé, October 29 to November 28, 1925.
- E 8th Briand, November 28, 1925 to March 9, 1926.
- F 9th Briand, March 9 to June 23, 1926.
- G 10th Briand, June 23 to July 19, 1926.
- H 2nd Herriot, July 19-23, 1926.
- I 4th Poincaré, July 23, 1926 to November 11, 1928.

TABLE 26

MEMBERS PUTTING INTERPELLATIONS 1924-28*

	A**	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	TOTAL
Auffray, com.		4			1					5
Auriol, soc.						2	1		2	5
Baraton, com.		1		1		2	2			6
Baroux, com.		1	1	2	5				1	10
Barthe, soc.		2	1		1				3	7
Bedouce, soc.		3							2	5
André Berthon, com.		2	2		1	4			9	18
Léon Blum, soc.	1	1				1			7	10
Marcel Cachin, com.	1	12	1	2	2	2	1	1	14	36
Charles Reibel, g. rep. dem.	1	1	1		1		2		1	7
Chastanet, soc.		1	1	2	2	1	1		2	10
Chaussy, soc.					2	1	2	2		7
Clamamus, com.		2	1	1	1				5	10
Cornavin, com.		1	1	1		3	1		9	16
Dalimier, rad-soc.		2	2						2	6
Doriot, com.		1	4	1	2	2			5	15
Duclos, com.						1	1		3	5
Duval, union rep. dem.		1	1		1				2	5
Émile Borel, rad-soc.		1				1	1	1	1	5
Ernest Outrey, g. rep. dem.		2	1			1			1	5
Jean Félix, soc.		2	1	1					1	5
Ferdinand Faure, ind.		6	2	3	7		2		6	26
Henry Fontanier, soc.					4	1			6	11
Albert Fournier, com.									9	9
Frédéric Brunet, rep. soc.		2							3	5
Garchery, com.		2		1					9	12
Gautier, com.		3			1		1		7	12
Girod, rad-soc.		5		2	2	2	4		4	19
Guérin, u. rep. dem.		2		1		1			1	5
Jean Jadé, dem.		1		1					3	5
Renaud Jean, com.			2	1		1		1	7	12
Ernest Lafont, ind.		8	1	3	3	2	2		16	35
Laporte, com.		1			1	1			2	5
Lebas, soc.			1				1		4	6
Victor Lesache	1				1				3	5
Lobet, soc.	1	4								5
Margaine, rad-soc.		1				1	1		3	6
André Marty, com.		1		2		1	3		11	18
Guy de Montjou, u. rep. dem.		4				1	1		1	7
Paul Laffont, rad-soc.		1							4	5
Piquemal, com.		2	2		1	1			3	9
Rognon, soc.		1		1	3	1				6
Rollin, rep. gauche		4			1					5
Taittinger, u. rep. dem.		2	2	1					1	6
Jules Uhry, soc.				1	3		1		3	8
Vaillant-Couturier, com.		1	2	2	2	1			3	11
Victor, rad-soc.		2	1	3	1					7
Lucien Voilin, soc.		1		2	2	1				6
Ybarnégaray, u. rep. dem.		3	1			1				5
TOTAL	5	97	32	34	52	37	28	5	179	469
Total of all interpellations	6	174	50	63	93	68	45	8	337	844

*The data for this table were taken from Tables des matières, see p. 251 above.

**See the key on p. 251 to table No. 25.

TABLE 27

MEMBERS PUTTING INTERPELLATIONS 1924-28*

	SO 24	SE 24	SO 25	SE 25	SO 26	SE 26	SO 27	SE 27	SO 28	TOTAL
Auffray, com.	1	1	2	1						5
Auriol, soc.					3		1	1		5
Baraton, com.	1			1	4					6
Baroux, com.			2	6	1		1			10
Barthe, soc.		1	2		1		2	1		7
Bedouce, soc.	3						2			5
André Berthon, com.		1	3	1	5		6	2		18
Léon Blum, soc.	2				1	1	3		3	10
Marcel Cachin, com.	6	5	3	4	5	4	6	3		36
Charles Reibel, g. rep. dem.	2		1		3		1			7
Chastanet, soc.	1		1	3	3		1	1		10
Chaussy, soc.				1	6					7
Clamamus, com.	2		1	2			3	2		10
Cornavin, com.			2	1	5	2	3	2	1	16
Dalimier, rad-soc.			4				1	1		6
Doriot, com.			5	3	4	1	1		1	15
Duclos, com.					2	1	2			5
Duval, union rep. dem.		1	1		1		1		1	5
Émile Borel, rad-soc.			1		3	1				5
Ernest Outrey, g. rep. dem.	2		1		1		1			5
Jean Félix, soc.	1	1	1	1	1					5
Ferdinand Faure, ind.	3	2	3	8	5	1	2	2		26
Fontanier, soc.				1	4	3	2	1		11
Albert Fournier, com. soc.						3	4	1	1	9
Frédéric Brunet, rep. soc.	1	1			1			1	1	5
Garchery, com.			2	1		3	2	1	3	12
Gautier, com.		1	2		6		1		2	12
Girod, rad-soc.	2	2	1	3	7			2	2	19
Guérin, u. rep. dem.	1	1		1	1	1				5
Jean Jadé, dem.			1	1		2	1			5
Renaud Jean, com.			2	1	3		4		2	12
Ernest Lafont, ind.	2	4	3	6	5	4	6	4	1	35
Laporte, com.	1				2		1		1	5
Lebas, soc.			1		2	1	1	1		6
Victor Lesache, g. rep. dem.	1				1	2		1		5
Lobet, soc.	3	2								5
Margaine, rad-soc.	1				2	1	1	1		6
André Marty, com.	1			2	4	1	4	5	1	18
Guy de Montjou, u. rep. dem.	1	1	2		2		1			7
Paul Laffont, rad-soc.			1				2	2		5
Piquemal, com.		1	3		2		2		1	9
Rognon, soc.		1		3	2					6
Rollin, rep. g.	1	2	1	1						5
Taittinger, u. rep. dem.	1	1	2	1				1		6
Jules Uhry, soc.				3	3	1	1			8
Vaillant-Couturier, com.		1	2	3	2	1	1	1		11
Victor Jean, rad-soc.		2	1	4						7
Lucien Voilin, soc.		1		4	1					6
Ybarnégaray, u. rep. dem.		1	3		1					5
TOTAL	40	34	60	67	105	34	71	37	21	469
Total of all interpellations	62	70	98	114	186	93	115	69	37	844

*The data for this table were taken from Tables des matières, 1924-28, Annales, Chambre des Députés. This includes all members putting five or more interpellations.

TABLE 28
CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES
Voting Strength of Party Groups*

	1924	1926	1927
Communist	26	26	28
Socialist	104	98	95
Republican and French Socialists	43	41	40
Radical-Socialist	139	136	136
Left Radical	40	40	39
Republicans of the Left	38	32	34
Democrats	14	14	13
Republican Democratic Left	43	35	34
Republican Democratic Union	104	104	100
Independent Left		13	14
Unattached (non-inscrit)	104	98	95
Affiliation unknown			1
TOTAL	655	637	629

* The information for this table was obtained from the names of members of groups published for each of the years given in the Journal officiel.

TABLE 29

PARTY AFFILIATION OF DEPUTIES PUTTING INTERPELLATIONS*

CABINET	Francois-Marsal June 9-14, 1924	1st Herriot, June 14, 1924 to April 17, 1925	2nd Painlevé, April 17, to October 29, 1925	3rd Painlevé, October 29, to November 28, 1925	8th Briand, November 28, 1925 to March 9, 1926	9th Briand, March 9, to June 23, 1926	10th Briand, June 23, to July 19, 1926	2nd Herriot, July 19-23, 1926	4th Poincaré, July 23, 1926 to November 11, 1928	TOTAL
Communist	1	37	19	13	19	21	9	2	110	231
Socialist	1	26	10	8	25	15	10	3	72	170
Republican and Fr. Socialists	1	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>21</u>	39
Radical-Socialist	0	<u>23</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>52</u>	133
Left Radical	0	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>	20
Republicans of the Left	<u>0</u>	6	0	1	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>	17
Democrats	0	6	0	6	5	1	0	0	7	25
Republican Democratic Left	<u>2</u>	13	2	5	3	0	<u>2</u>	1	<u>12</u>	41
Republican Democratic Union	<u>0</u>	31	8	8	10	10	2	0	<u>22</u>	91
Unattached (<u>non-inscrit</u>)	0	17	<u>5</u>	6	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	30	76
Affiliation unknown		1								1
TOTAL	6	174	50	63	93	68	45	8	337	844
Put by parties in cabinet	<u>2</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>263</u>

*The figures in italics indicate that the interpellations were put by party groups represented in the cabinet. The information for the chart was obtained from the Journal officiel, and from the Tables des matières, 1924-28, Annales, Chambre des Députés.

TABLE 30
FRANCE
MINISTERIAL CRISES FROM 1871 to 1940*

NON-POLITICAL		
New President of the Republic, formal change only		6
Ill health of an important Minister		4
Voluntary action of the Ministry		3
TOTAL		13
POLITICAL, WITHOUT ACTION BY PARLIAMENT		
Political action of the President of the Republic		3
Changes resulting from elections		6
Disagreements within the Ministry		6
War-Time changes		3
Change during legislative recess		1
Premier elected President of the Republic		2
Minor changes involving only one Minister		2
Stavisky affair and Paris riots, 1934		2
TOTAL		30
POLITICAL, ACTION BY PARLIAMENT		
Interpellation		30
Law, resolution, or amendment		12
Appropriation or finance**		17
Committee of investigation		2
Ministerial declaration		1
Committee on Foreign Affairs (Senate)		1
TOTAL		63
TOTAL CRISES, 1871 TO 1940		106

INTERPELLATION, RESIGNATION ADMITTED FROM

	Chamber	Senate	Both
<u>Ordre du jour motivé</u>	12	1	13
<u>Ordre du jour pur et simple</u>	1	1	2
<u>Ordre du jour motivé</u> on discussion of late	1	0	1
Adjournment of interpellation by resolution	1	0	1
Refusal of adjournment of interpellation	3	1	4
<u>Ordre du jour pur et simple</u> , questions transformed into interpellation	2	1	3
Majority on <u>ordre du jour</u> too small	2	0	2
Unsatisfactory nature of majority**	3	0	3
Withdrawal of Socialist support from Ministry	1	0	1
TOTAL CRISES RESULTING FROM INTERPELLATION	26	4	30

*Based on Les Ministères de la France (1871-1930) (1937): Guy Lyaudet, Les Déclarations Ministérielles et les Ministères du 4 Septembre 1870 au 1^{er} Janvier 1914 (1914); Journal officiel, Chambre Débat: Auguste Boulhier, L'instabilité Ministérielle (1939).

** This figure includes five crises provoked by the refusal of decree power over finance (de pleins pouvoirs financiers), namely: Briand, July 17, 1926; Flanin, May 30, 1935; Bouisson, June 4, 1937; Poincaré, July 21, 1937 (Senate); Poincaré, April 8, 1938 (Senate). See Boulhier, op. cit., pp. 162-165.

*** One of these was resignation of Daladier on March 20, 1940 after a secret debate on war and war aims. He resigned because 300 were recorded as not voting. The 300 or at least part of them were misplaced by accident. See New York Times, March 21 and 22, 1940.

TABLE 31
 INTERPELLATIONS
Wahlperiode*

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	TOTAL
Answered and discussed	66	8	100	20	0	0	0	0	194
No answer but discussed	0	1	28	0	0	0	0	0	29
Joined to the budget discussion	0	0	46	102	32	0	0	0	180
Without action (<u>Unerledigt</u>)	58	51	32	22	48	3	9	0	223
Written answer	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
With motion	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Removed from <u>Tagesordnung</u>	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Returned	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Withdrawn	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Referred to Committee	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Answer refused	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	18
Joined to report	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	5
Joined to bill (<u>Gesetz Entwurf</u>)	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
With resolution	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Joined to debate	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	6
Answered not discussed	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	127	62	231	151	91	3	9	0	674

*Wahlperiode: I, 1920-24; II, 1924; III, 1924-28; IV, 1928-30; V, 1930-32; VI, 1932; VII, 1932-33; VIII, 1933.

Marten op. cit. pp. 44-45, Verhandlungen des Reichstags, passim. The data for 1920 to 1928 are from Marten, the data since 1928 are from the Verhandlungen.

TABLE 32
INTERPELLATIONS*

	Wahlperiode								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
<u>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</u> (Nazis)					32	0	0	0	32
<u>Nationalsozialistische Freitspartei</u>		12	1						13
<u>Deutschnationale Volkspartei</u> (Nationalist Party)	33	10	40	50	24	2	3	0	162
<u>Deutsche Demokratische Partei</u> (Democrats)	11	1	21	3					36
<u>Deutsche Volkspartei</u> (Peoples' Party)	13	1	10	8					32
<u>Zentrum</u> (Catholic)	9	1	23	10	1	0	4	0	48
<u>Zentrum and Bayrische Volkspartei</u>				4	1	0	0	0	5
<u>Bayrische Volkspartei</u> (Bavarian Catholic)	1								1
<u>Wirtschaftliche Vereinigung</u> (Economic Union)			2	8					10
<u>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</u> (Socialist)	19	9	33	5	4	1	2	0	73
<u>Unabhängige Sozialdemokraten</u> (Independent Socialist)	24								24
<u>Kommunisten</u> (Communist)	1	27	89	45	22	0	0	0	184
Signed by the members of two or more parties	16	1	12	18	7	0	0	0	54
TOTAL	127	62	231	151	91	3	9	0	674

*For 1920-1928 see Marten, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48. For years since 1928, the *Verhandlungen, passim*.

Wahlperiode: I, 1920-24; II, 1924; III, 1924-28; IV, 1928-30; V, 1930-32; VI, 1932; VII, 1932-33; VIII, 1933.

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