

by hon. members pointing to other hon. members and suggesting they are either here or not here, that there is absenteeism when there is not. I believe, generally speaking, there is good reason why members from time to time happen not to be in the House, and that this kind of exchange is not very constructive or productive.

Mr. Jerome: Mr. Speaker, just to correct the record, if I may, on a point of privilege, the *Votes and Proceedings* referred to by the hon. member for St. John's East, in which he suggested it was indicated 14 committees were scheduled to sit this afternoon, in fact reveals that only seven committees were scheduled to meet this afternoon, of which one met this morning. This committee, the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, had a meeting scheduled for both this morning and this afternoon; and since it completed its work this morning that reduces the number to six. Even at that—

Mr. Speaker: I would point out that we are debating a point of order and perhaps we should attempt to limit ourselves. We are going backwards instead of forwards. My impression is that we might try and debate the business of the House this afternoon, though we do not appear to be intent on doing so. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary might be allowed to finish his presentation as quickly as possible and then I shall recognize the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond.

Mr. Jerome: I only wanted to say that we have endeavoured through the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra to co-ordinate the efforts of committees. Our most recent efforts were an endeavour to confine committee meetings to four at any one time, except in so far as the scheduling may be interrupted in cases where witnesses have been summoned. We are all anxious to try and co-ordinate this work in order to eliminate the problem, but it does not help to exaggerate the problem out of all proportion by suggesting that 14 committees have in fact been called to meet when in truth only half the number has been scheduled.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has already spoken to the point of order; I am referring to the hon. member for St. John's East. I wonder whether we should not allow the matter to stand there. It seems to me I have indicated what my thoughts are. Basically and essentially I agree with the hon. member for St. John's East, and I am not in disagreement with the arguments brought forth by the parliamentary secretary. Both sides of the argument have been stated. This is a matter of equal interest to hon. members on both sides of the House. I am sure there are members on the government side who, as members of this committee, are as anxious to have this matter settled as hon. members of other parties. I should hope that those who speak on their behalf in the high councils of Parliament, where representatives of different parties meet, will take into account the desires of the different members who are anxious that a solution to this very serious and pressing problem be found. I really do not see what more can be said at this time, except for the Speaker to reiterate his determination to press ahead with the business of the House.

Business of House

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege and I do not wish to detract from the point of order I raised, because it is very substantial. It has to do with my rights as a member of this House. My question of privilege arises from the fact that I do not think the parliamentary secretary should be allowed to misrepresent what I said and by so doing misrepresent the facts. What I said was that there were 14 standing committees scheduled to meet today according to *Votes and Proceedings*. That journal does not show the fact that there is a subcommittee of the Committee on External Affairs also meeting today. Furthermore, *Votes and Proceedings* does not show that the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization leaves at four o'clock today on a trip to Washington. If what the hon. parliamentary secretary said represents his only contribution, he should have remained in his seat.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Again I suggest to hon. members that there is little point in proceeding in this direction. We have spent 20 minutes of the time of the House now considering something I do not think relates to the order of business this afternoon or the order of business of the five, six, seven or 15 committees, whatever number there are, and I think we should now proceed at this time with the business of the House.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, could the parliamentary secretary shed some light on the question of what we will be considering tomorrow and next week in the House?

Mr. Jerome: Yes, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon we will be proceeding with government order No. 78, a resolution in the name of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen), dealing with the establishment of a committee on public order. If that matter is concluded today, and in any event if that matter consumes the full time of today, we will commence with these measures tomorrow in this order: Bill C-244, the Prairie grain stabilization measure; Bill C-238, the Canadian Wheat Board Act amendments; Bill C-246 respecting pilotage, and Bill C-240, the Post Office Act. I think it has been agreed that Tuesday and Friday of next week will be opposition days. If the debate scheduled for today is not concluded, we will return to this matter on Wednesday of next week.

Mr. Baldwin: For the purposes of clarification, will the parliamentary secretary indicate that if we do not conclude the debate we are to commence in a few minutes we will continue with it tomorrow?

Mr. Jerome: If we do not conclude the measure we are on today we will move tomorrow to Bill C-244 and the items enumerated.