

tion meetings. Last session standing committees were formally constituted on February 19. The first committee to meet was the committee on printing, on March 4. The committee on agriculture and colonization met first on March 17; the committee on standing orders on April 30. The committee on banking and commerce did not meet until May 13; the committee on miscellaneous private bills did not meet until June 5; and the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines held its first meeting on July 8. Six standing committees, namely, those on privileges and elections, public accounts, marine and fisheries, mines, forests and waters, industrial and international relations, and the debates committee did not meet at all during last session.

On March 2 of last year I asked for the appointment of a select committee on radio broadcasting. The committee was appointed on March 13, and did not hold its first meeting until almost two months later, on May 6. The first evidence was taken in that committee on May 14, and considerable criticism of the delay in this instance was voiced in the committee itself when it met. While I am on this point I wish to urge upon the government the acceptance of the recommendation of the last radio broadcasting committee's report, that a committee of the house review the policies and operations of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation annually from now on, and particularly as soon as possible this session.

The fact that six of the committees did not meet last session and that other committees held very few meetings indicates the urgent need for some better plan of enlisting the services of members generally in the work of the committees of the house. The need is more apparent than ever in a war-time session of parliament, and I ask the government to take immediate steps in this direction.

Some early consideration, in my opinion, should also be given to reviewing and modernizing the whole of our parliamentary procedure. The war is bringing many changes in the lives of our people and in our entire national structure. Parliament, therefore, in my opinion should not only bring itself abreast of these changes but should show that it is not afraid to give leadership to them in its own internal conduct.

I ask the Prime Minister if he will give sympathetic and careful attention to the points which I have raised.

Right. Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING
(Prime Minister): I am pleased to say to my hon. friend that I heartily approve the sug-

gestions which he has made. Indeed, the government itself has felt that it was most desirable to have committees meet at an early day, and care will be taken to see that they are constituted as soon as the debate on the address is concluded, if not, by arrangement with my hon. friends opposite, before that time.

As to some of the committees not having met last session, that in no sense is a reflection on the government. As my hon. friend is aware, any member of the house has a right to ask that certain matters should be referred to the appropriate committees. If no request is made for a committee to meet, and matters are not thereby referred, there is obviously no need of calling a committee together.

My hon. friend has spoken about some delay in constituting the committees. I am quite prepared that we on this side should take our share of the blame, if such is to be given, for any delay; but I wish to point out to him that time and again the appointment of committees has been delayed because of the inability to get from my hon. friend and his supporters opposite the names of the members of his party whom they desired to have serve on committees. However, he no doubt intends to see that they act promptly in these matters and we may be spared that delay on this occasion.

As to the number of committees that are to meet, I imagine that a good deal of the time of members of the house this session will be taken up by service on the different committees, because there are some committees the work of which will require considerable time. I do not think the business of the house is expedited at all by having a very large number of committees, with members serving on two or three committees at one and the same time. Rather, I should think it would expedite matters to have the committees properly attended by limiting their number. I might mention immediately the committees which this year will be of special importance.

My hon. friend has asked that the committee on radio broadcasting should be appointed again this year. The government fully intends to see that it is reconstituted. The speech from the throne has mentioned the reconstitution of the committee on rehabilitation and reconstruction. It also indicates another committee, a very important committee, on social security. The committee on war expenditures will also be reconstituted, as well as the committee on the Defence of Canada regulations. In addition to these there will be the committee on railways and