

decision without reading the evidence or knowing anything about the case. That was all right. It showed confidence in our committee which was justified. I do not say the evidence should be read, but when criticism is directed against us for not supplying the evidence it is going a little too far.

The rest of the criticism was equally unwarranted. This house has no apology to make to anyone for the course of events during last session. We anticipate criticism again this session. No one can take part in public affairs and hold himself above criticism. Sometimes a little check-up does good, and everyone is subject to being jacked up on occasions. No one complains about that at all, but I do appeal to the press of this dominion to deal fairly with us and to see that they verify their facts before publishing them. That is something they failed to do on many occasions last year. I appeal to them to be square with us. We are conducting a judicial institution with judicial calm and taking all the time that is necessary. We are not hurrying a single case. We are giving these cases the very best thought of which we are capable, and we are rendering our decisions according to the dictates of our conscience. In these circumstances, I think we should be justly treated.

This session we have no fewer than sixty-seven contested cases, which represent a large docket. We have many other cases that are not contested. The honourable Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Haig) suggests that we should lay down some deadline for the completion of cases. Our Rules provide that no petition may be filed later than five weeks from today; that is to say, by February 17 the right to file petitions expires. Last session we insisted that all cases be completed within one month after the final date for filing petitions, and I have no doubt that the committee will follow this procedure again. It is certain that no cases will be filed after February 17, and probably no cases will be heard that are not completed by the end of March.

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** May I interrupt the honourable senator to ask a question? Has it been customary in the past to extend the date for filing petitions?

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** It has been done.

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** Has it been done over the years?

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** Very frequently over the years, yes, but by no means has there been established any precedent for doing it again.

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** Has it been done as a result of a motion brought in this house?

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** On recommendation, of course, of the committee. Usually special circumstances have been pleaded which have justified this action. There were several reasons which justified our action in that regard last year. There is no assurance that we shall do it again this year unless there are good reasons for doing so.

Until last year divorce applicants were allowed an unlimited time to complete their cases in connection with the necessary publication, services, and filings under the rules. However, last year we set a deadline, and those cases not completed by the appointed time went over to the next session. We shall certainly follow that procedure again this year, and this should take care of what the Leader of the Opposition has suggested.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** Thank you.

The motion was agreed to, on division.

#### PETITIONS WITHDRAWN

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck** presented and moved concurrence in the second report of the Standing Committee on Divorce, recommending that an application for leave to withdraw a petition be granted and that the parliamentary fees paid under Rule 140 be refunded to the petitioner, less the sum of \$25 to apply on costs, including printing and translation costs.

*The report was read by the Clerk Assistant.*

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** Honourable senators, before the motion is put, may I inform the members of the house who are not members of the committee that it has been the custom over the years, when divorce petitions have been filed but later withdrawn, to refund the parliamentary fees, less \$10, for printing and translation costs. However, the small sum of \$10 is scarcely enough to pay these costs, and this year the committee thought it fair, and decided this morning, that the amount to be retained should be \$25, which is a very moderate sum indeed.

The motion was agreed to, on division.

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck** severally presented and moved concurrence in the third, fourth and fifth reports of the Standing Committee on Divorce, recommending that applications for leave to withdraw certain petitions be granted and that the parliamentary fees paid