

*Procedure Committee Report*

organization of the business of the House of Commons. However, the house, and the government, should take into consideration the reports which are presented by those committees.

In fact, several times committee reports were presented to the house and were simply placed in government organizations' pigeon-holes, and then we never heard any more about them.

It seems to me that the suggestions which are made by the committees should be considered more attentively and received more seriously by the government than they have been in the past.

When members of various parties in the house sit during weeks and even months to study bills and present reports after a thorough study, I believe that the government, whichever it may be, should at least consider the recommendations made.

If that was done, as pointed out a while ago by the hon. member for Port Arthur, it would prevent a political party from parading across this country talking about the need for a stable government, a government with a strong majority, a strong government, so that legislation can be passed.

In my opinion, if the recommendations of parliamentary committees were taken more into account political issues would no longer have to be raised during election campaigns, and people would have more consideration for parliament, or at least more respect than they have at present in certain parts of the country.

We have had strong governments; as a matter of fact, from 1958 to 1962, the Conservative party had 207 members sitting to the right of the Speaker. Yet, at that time, it was not the majority, after all, which prevented the passage of measures or the concurrence in reports submitted by various parliamentary committees. It was at that time that Canada experienced the most deplorable economic situation since the number of unemployed reached over a million, in spite of an overwhelming majority.

Since 1963, we have been told time and again that we have a minority government. That may be true but what is to stop a minority government from introducing legislation and considering committee reports tabled in the house?

I think the majority of us are ready to examine such reports seriously, not in the interest of political parties but in the interest of the Canadian people.

[Mr. Caouette.]

Consequently, the government should stop hurling its election platform at us since it does not even take into account the committee reports submitted to the house.

Mr. Speaker, certain ideas were submitted to the house and accepted. The committee on procedure and organization has also made some suggestions.

For instance, it made certain recommendations to parliament concerning the payment of telecommunications between a member's riding and his office in the parliament buildings, regardless of party considerations. But that report was disregarded. It was studied and the legislation was passed.

But here again, why tell us that the committee is considering the question, when quite recently, the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette) accused us of not having paid our telephone bills?

Mr. Speaker, I should say that I have now paid mine, but the fact remains that the act exists and that it is not observed at this time, even in the House of Commons, even though most of the members voted for concurrence in that report.

As for the report we are now considering, that is, the fifteenth report of the special committee on procedure and organization, I wish, at this time, to deal with paragraphs 23 and 24. First of all, paragraph 23 reads as follows:

Your committee is of the opinion that the effectiveness of parliament would be improved if the house were to adjourn for certain periods during which committees would be able to meet for a week at a time. Not only would the work of the house and its committees be thus expedited, but it is probable that greater public attention would be directed toward committee activities.

I have serious doubts about that, Mr. Speaker. I go on:

Your committee is also of the opinion that members of parliament should be enabled to attend to constituency business in the ridings for a week at a time during the same specified periods.

That means that while committees are sitting members would go to their constituencies, while other hon. members are sitting on committees for a week now and then. I continue:

Your committee therefore recommends that the house should adjourn at regular intervals for two weeks at a time in order to accomplish these two purposes. It should be a duty of the proposed chairmen's panel to organize the business of committees in such a way as to ensure that approximately half of all the committees currently functioning should meet during each of the two weeks.