

THE SENATE

Thursday, January 10, 1957

The Senate met at 3 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

Routine proceedings.

DIVORCE
PETITIONS

Hon. Arthur W. Roebuck, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Divorce, presented a number of petitions for divorce.

He said: Honourable senators, I have not actually counted these petitions, but there are about 280 here.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Honourable senators, I have several reports to present from the Committee on Divorce, and perhaps I might make some comments now. Already some 293 petitions have been filed. There are, however, 418 open files. By that I mean that that number of actions has been instituted to the extent of publication of notice in the *Canada Gazette*. Publication of such notice is required of every applicant to Parliament for a Bill of Divorce. Then when the application is received a file is opened and the proceedings are under way. As I have said, 418 such files are being prepared for this session, and honourable senators will be interested to know that 161 files have already been processed to the point where the cases are set down for hearing.

The committee held its first meeting this morning and completed the necessary organizational work at this stage. I have the honour to report that the members once again expressed sufficient confidence in their chairman to re-elect him.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: This was duly appreciated by the recipient of that honour.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: And by honourable senators generally.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Thank you.

The committee was also pleased to welcome two additions to its membership in the persons of Senator Isnor and Senator Taylor (Westmorland) who will replace the late Senators Ross and Stevenson, both of whom were faithful in their attendance and valuable members of the committee. We have already expressed our regret in that

regard, but there is no reason why we should not record it again while welcoming their successors.

I have not the exact figures, but approximately 20 to 25 cases are contested. As honourable senators know, often contested cases are difficult and take a long time to hear.

The last date for the filing of new petitions will be February 18, six weeks from the date of the opening of Parliament.

In the 1956 session there were 435 petitions. The actual number of those cases heard and recommended was 356, and 9 were rejected; 14 were withdrawn, and 56 which had not been completed were transferred to the present session.

COMMITTEE QUORUM—AUTHORITY TO SIT
DURING SENATE ADJOURNMENTS AND
TO APPOINT SUBCOMMITTEES

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I now wish to present the committee's first report:

1. Your committee recommend that their quorum be reduced to three members for all purposes, including the taking of evidence upon oath by the committee or any subcommittee as to the matters set forth in petitions for bills of divorce.

The quorum is the same as in former years, and has applied to the committee and subcommittees ever since we adopted the present form of organization.

2. Your committee also recommend that leave be given them to sit during all adjournments of the Senate, and also during sittings of the Senate.

I hope the occasions when it is necessary to sit during adjournments will be few.

3. Your committee further recommend that authority be granted for the appointment of as many subcommittees as deemed necessary by the committee for the purpose of hearing and inquiring into such petitions for divorce as may be referred to them by the Committee on Divorce. The subcommittee in each case to report their finding to the main committee.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be considered?

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: With leave, I move that it be adopted now.

The motion was agreed to.

PETITIONS SERVED AND ADVERTISED FOR
LAST SESSION

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Honourable senators will recall that the special session of Parliament which opened on November 26, 1956 and sat four days was continued until January 8, 1957. The practice in filing a petition for divorce is to request that it be heard at the next session of Parliament. Your committee therefore submits the following as its second report:

Inasmuch as petitions for bills of divorce were not dealt with at the special session of Parliament held