

*Justice and Legal Affairs Committee*

Commons broadcast on television and placed before the people.

I suggest that if we are really serious about this matter we will never have any concern, Mr. Speaker, that if the quorum is 20 there will not be 20 members present. I suggest there will always be a quorum if this course is followed by way of experiment. It would be one way in which one could find out the reaction of the people, for certainly today in the British press and on every side consideration is being given to this procedure as one means of bringing about a stronger relationship between the people and the parliament of the country.

● (3:20 p.m.)

**Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley):** Mr. Speaker, in raising this matter the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said he would not say this was the most important motion ever to come before this house, but it certainly has generated quite a debate. I should like to make this suggestion. In view of the fact that we have seemingly reached the point where there is agreement on the matter, perhaps a reappraisal could be made of the committee structure or the membership of committees to ascertain if members are absent because they are not interested in that particular committee, if they are away because they are attending another committee, or absent because of other responsibilities in their constituencies or other government business.

It seems to me these three reasons would cover all absentees. If a member is absent because he is not interested in a particular issue before the committee, then he should be replaced. Before we go ahead with the motion to reduce the quorum of the committee we should take another look at the membership to ascertain why members are not in attendance.

[Translation]

**Mr. Maurice Allard (Sherbrooke):** Mr. Speaker, there are complaints that members are absent from the committee sittings and, on the other hand, we are talking about reducing or maintaining the quorum. I should like to point out that the present uneasiness, in a certain sense, goes much further back.

When the committees are formed at the beginning of the session, I think more attention should be paid to the talents, the wishes and the qualifications of members. I make the point today, without any malice whatever, simply to state my position on this matter.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

In my case, for instance, at the beginning of the session I called on you to express my earnest desire to sit on the justice and legal affairs committee and on the committee on broadcasting, films and assistance to the arts—in the case of the first named committee, as a lawyer and independent member. We know that it is helpful to have on the committee a member who can serve as buffer between the accusers and the accused, in the case of the second named committee, for having been on 35 televised broadcasts and for being interested in the matter.

You referred me to the member for Chambly-Rouville (Mr. Pilon). For the last three months he has been telling me that "next week," I shall be transferred to these committees. I have been put on the committee for northern affairs and national resources. I am not interested in northern affairs, nor are my electors.

If more notice were taken of the wishes, the requests and the qualifications of members, well, more members would be in attendance at the sittings of the committees. That is why I am not present at the sittings of the committee on northern affairs and national resources and of the committee on the library, and I am waiting to be transferred to the committees I have asked to sit on.

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** Is the house ready for the question? Shall the motion be adopted?

**Mr. Knowles:** On division.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. Members:** Yea.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it. I declare the motion carried on division.

Motion agreed to on division.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

### CONCURRENCE IN FIRST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

**Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington South)** moved:

That the first report of the standing committee on public accounts, presented to the house on Wednesday, April 27, 1966, be now concurred in.

**Mr. Speaker:** Shall the motion carry?