

Q. —who served in a very important capacity over there on the Defence Research Board during the war, and he said Canada should have a committee of the sort I have described.

I notice that several scientific magazines published on the other side have attributed to that scientific committee a great deal of Britain's success in the post-war period. What would be your comment on this?—A. I think there is quite a lot of misunderstanding as to the functions and status of that committee. It happens in Britain that, largely because of the existence of the House of Lords, there are, in the houses of parliament, quite a number of people who are themselves scientists. Lord Cherwell and Lord Adrian are among a number of people who have received peerages because of scientific accomplishments, and they felt that since there was a group of distinguished scientists who were members of the house, or of both houses, they would like to bring in some of the leading scientists in the country for informal discussions.

This body has no official status; it is not a part of the government; it has the status of a casual "get together" of a group of people who feel they are interested, and that is all. It advises the government solely in the way in which any organization could, if it wished, give advice to the government; it has no formal function as an advisory body and it does not appear at any point in the organization chart, which I have here, of scientific bodies within the British government.

I think that here conditions are a bit different. I certainly feel that if there were a group of members here who had some scientific knowledge and who wished to have a group of leading Canadian scientists meet with them once every three months, and if this was started by somebody informally, it could surely be done. But my own feeling is that Sir Robert Watson Watt has greatly over emphasized the importance of the committee to which you have referred. I think it has been very important in that it has produced debate at a very high level on some of the major issues, and started some thinking; but I should point out that this has no relation to our advisory council; it is on the same status as the Canadian club or any voluntary group that chooses to get together. It happens that what was done was to get together a group of members of parliament and a group of non members, but the body is not official.

*By Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North):*

Q. Would it help the situation if the government were to make a number of scientists into senators?—A. I think, sir, that is not a matter on which I could express an opinion.

*By Mr. Murphy (Lambton West):*

Q. That committee in Britain was composed of 163 members of parliament together with representatives of 85 scientific technological institutions.—A. Yes, but it is a voluntary society.

Q. I know. I appreciate that; but apparently it was such a success that the government profited greatly by its advice. Incidentally the United States Department of Commerce, referring to this committee in February, 1952 and the rising inventive competition of Great Britain had this to say:

"One of the principal instrumentalities of their industrial and scientific position was their parliamentary scientific committee—"

The Department of Commerce called it "parliamentary" but, as I have explained it is not really that.

"—which is an unofficial partnership of members of the House of Lords and of the Commons on one hand and of national scientific institutions and recognized research bodies on the other."