

from smaller committees, and from explanations given at meetings. I invite honourable senators to read what the leader of the opposition (Hon. Mr. Haig) said yesterday. He wants improvements. But of what kind? I can find nothing in his explanation which will correct one single defect. Can he assure us that the government will change its practice of bringing down important measures in the last week of the session? We could not enforce such a change: we have no power to do it. Would it not be better to have more members on our committees? Maintain the quorum at the same figure but give the opportunity to other senators to attend, to listen, to speak and to vote. The larger the committee, the better work it will do.

I may be wrong, but the reasons so far advanced for the change do not begin to convince me that our rules will thereby be improved. As for meeting in Committee of the Whole, the existing rules provide for that; all that it is necessary to do is to follow the rules as they are, and then we shall be on the safe side.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** I think we are trying to take too long a view. This is one session; next session we can change our procedure if we see fit. As a matter of fact, those of us who were at the conference of the senators know that while the suggestion was made that the committees be composed of seventeen members each, the leader of the government pointed out that we could fix the number at twenty-five, or thirty, or whatever figure we saw fit. He thought that to start with seventeen would be a good number. As regards attendance, I wish some members of the Finance Committee, on which I have served every year, would stand up and tell us how many times they have attended its meetings.

**Hon. Mr. Reid:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** Very few. Most of the work was done by the steering committee of that committee, who got together, found out what was to be done, and then called the committee together again. There was a very slim attendance. In any event, this amendment is not like unto the laws of the Medes and Persians—unalterable. As the honourable member from Kootenay East (Hon. Mr. King) told us, tomorrow we could bring in notice of an amendment, and two days after we could again change the rules.

Let there be no misunderstanding. I said a year ago that I was satisfied with the rule the Senate has been applying. I believe it has made for the finest kind of service to the people of Canada. But I have met many other people who thought differently. Now the leader of the government (Hon. Mr.

Robertson), in a spirit of fairness, of sincerity and of humility, comes forward and tells us that he withdraws the suggestions he made last year but he thinks that this new proposal is one whereby the Senate, within its own confines, can give greater service. Personally I would suppose, were I chairman of one of these committees, that I had a better chance of bringing together seventeen people to do a particular job than of getting fifty.

**Hon. Mr. Marcotte:** What about the quorum?

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** The quorum has nothing to do with it.

**Hon. Mr. Marcotte:** Oh, yes, it has.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** You can have a quorum of any number you like. For the Banking and Commerce it is nine, and frequently we have an attendance of ten, and it is pretty hard to get them there. Its members like those of the Finance Committee, do a lot of individual digging and hard work.

The scheme as embodied in this motion may not work, but it can do harm to try it for one session. Candidly, had I been the leader of the government, I would not have introduced this motion. In my heart of hearts I do not believe it is necessary. But I have often been wrong, and the government leader is as capable as I am, and probably more capable, of deciding upon and presenting a measure to improve the service of the Senate to the people of Canada. I am prepared to give this scheme a trial. That is all I ask of my colleagues. If when we meet again next year we find the results unsatisfactory, I will be the first man to stand up in this chamber and say so; and if a majority agree with me, we can make a change. In any event we are acting within the measure of our own powers; we are doing our work in our own house: and I may add that it is no new suggestion that we should operate in Committee of the Whole. I am persuaded that if I were a member of the Transport and Communications Committee and held the same views as does the honourable senator from Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Lambert), I would attend every meeting of that committee. I would be so well informed on the matters discussed before that committee I could answer every question asked about them in this house. I do not think I am boasting when I say that I can do that now on matters of finance, and this is because I have taken a deep interest in the work of our Finance Committee and have faithfully attended its meetings.

This motion is not for the purpose of wrecking the Senate, or even reforming it; it