

Mr. LIGUORI LACOMBE (Laval-Two Mountains): The statement made by Colonel Thompson is extremely serious. He asserted—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already called the attention of the Minister of National War Services (Mr. LaFleche) to the fact that we are dealing now with the amendment to the motion, and I have asked hon. members who wish to speak to confine themselves to that, not to enter into a discussion of the merits of the matter.

Mr. LACOMBE: I understand that we are keeping closely now to the point of order. I draw the attention of the Chair to standing order 63:

(1) At the commencement of each session, a special committee, consisting of five members, shall be appointed, whose duty it shall be to prepare and report, with all convenient speed, lists of members to compose the following standing committees of the house.

(a) On privileges and elections, . . .

(e) On public accounts, to consist of 50 members, 15 of whom shall constitute a quorum.

I should like now to be permitted to cite some decisions respecting standing order 63. I turn first to paragraph 593 in Beausnes's Parliamentary Rules and Forms. It is as follows:

There shall be a standing committee, to be designated "the committee on public accounts", for the examination of the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by parliament to meet the public expenditure, to consist of eleven members, who shall be nominated at the commencement of every session, and of whom five shall be a quorum.

This is a decision given in the parliament at Westminster. Then, in paragraph 599 I find the following decision:

It is then moved that the said standing committees be severally empowered to examine and inquire into all such matters and things as may be referred to them by the house, and to report from time to time their observations and opinions thereon, with power to send for persons, papers and records.

Then again, this decision in paragraph 604:

A committee which is appointed beforehand, for the consideration of all subjects of a particular class, arising in the course of the session, is denominated a "standing committee".

And this decision in paragraph 605:

Generally speaking, the proceedings of a select (special) committee are assimilated, like those of standing committee, to those of a committee of the whole house.

And this last decision, in paragraph 618:

The committee can obtain directly from the officers of a department such papers as the

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house itself may order, but in case the papers can be brought down only by address, it is necessary to make a motion on the subject in the house through the chairman.

This decision is reported in Bourinot, at pages 470 and 471. I submit respectfully that the amendment of the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis) is in order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does any other hon. member wish to speak?

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): I do not know whether I would be speaking to the point of order or to the amendment.

Mr. COLDWELL: Make up your mind.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): I have been trying to make up my mind as to just how I should direct my few remarks, because if I speak to the point of order in the manner followed by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) I should have a good deal of latitude. However, I would prefer to save my remarks until Mr. Speaker's ruling has been given, at which time I would be in order in making my observations.

Mr. SPEAKER: We now have an amendment before us, and I am asking hon. members if they now wish to speak as to the relevancy of the amendment. If hon. members confine themselves to that, I shall be in a position afterwards to give my ruling as to the relevancy of the amendment.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): I shall wait until after Mr. Speaker has given his ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER: Since it appears that no other hon. members wish to speak I would say that I have listened carefully to the hon. member for Laval-Two Mountains (Mr. Lacombe). He has quoted standing order 63 respecting the constitution and quorum of a committee. He makes further reference to paragraph 593 in Beausnes's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, but I would point out that that paragraph deals only with the rules applicable to the British House of Commons. I think there can be no doubt in the minds of hon. members as to the position of a standing committee, namely, that all matters submitted to it are of course bound by the reference from the house to the committee.

The rules are perfectly clear and well understood, where they state that any matter which could be called a substantive matter cannot