

lead in achieving a low quorum, I think it would be highly desirable. I would be prepared to go along with the suggestion that it be reduced to nine, but I would also be prepared to move that it be reduced to five.

Mr. REID: Mr. Chairman, one thing has come to my mind with these committees. Have we taken into consideration the possibility perhaps of striking off subcommittees to investigate certain areas of these estimates? I think this would provide more flexibility.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think we are empowered to do that under the present set-up of the committee system.

Mr. REID: Well, perhaps this is something that the steering committee might take the trouble to look into. I think we require a great deal more flexibility in these committee standards.

The CHAIRMAN: This is something that we might to take up in a general sense, but I think that at the present time, in order to examine the estimates, we have to do it in this way, and in order to formally pass any vote, we have to have thirteen members. The purpose of this was to reduce it to nine.

Even on our black Friday, or black Thursday, whatever it was, when there was considerable amount of confusion, more than has existed since then, I might say, we did get nine members, and we probably could have got one or two others by dragging bodies in, as Mr. Wahn has suggested. But the general procedure in other committees has been to reduce the quorum to nine, and the suggestion, as far as reducing it further, is that perhaps it would not meet with approval and might generate a considerable debate in the House of Commons which might cause a lot of delay.

Mr. WAHN: I understand in other jurisdictions assembly is carried on with only two or three people in the room. The proceedings are printed, and those who are interested read them.

The CHAIRMAN: As a matter to study for future procedures, it may well be a very good suggestion, but at the present time, in the light of present circumstances, it seems that a reduction of a quorum to nine, in the view of the steering committee was that it would be a move forward.

Mr. FAULKNER: Mr. Chairman, although I have the greatest sympathy for your position, I might just say a word of commendation for your valiant effort in trying to keep this Committee together and getting them to meet, and when they have not met it certainly has not been due to any fault of yours. I think on the matter of principle, in trying to recognize the importance of committee work, that I cannot go along with any reduction in the quorum. I think something far more fundamental than just reduction of the quorum to meet the present difficulty is required, and by reducing the quorum we are just evading the problem, and I really think that special time has to be allocated to committee work, perhaps when the House is not sitting, or perhaps the House would sit less frequently in order to allow the committees to sit and to get their quorums, because my own personal experience has been that having the officials of the department at a committee is the most important thing, and a most