

committees are meeting at the same time, and practically have to meet at the same time, it is very necessary that the committees should not be composed of the same membership. That has happened in the past, and I submit to the House that that is a problem which we ought to tackle. While I am entirely in accord with what the hon. member has said as to the advisability of committees meeting as early as possible in the session, I would submit to him that that will not be an entirely adequate and sufficient solution of the difficulty that we have to face.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the main motion as amended?

Main motion as amended agreed to.

DEFENCE OF SEA COASTS AND OCEAN-BORNE COMMERCE

Mr. A. W. NEILL (Comox-Alberni) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, Canada should consider the question of the defence of our sea coasts and of our ocean-borne lines of commerce.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have framed this motion in the very simplest and broadest language. I wish to avoid the error into which I think the hon. member for South York (Mr. Maclean) fell the other day in introducing his resolution in connection with the British North America Act. He lost a good deal of support for the main principle of his motion by tacking on to it a detailed method of carrying it out.

I would ask the liberty of the House to diverge for a moment to perhaps a more personal matter. Some months ago I saw an editorial in a paper called the *Mail and Empire*—I should not say I saw it, because my attention was called to it. Personally I only subscribe for the better class of newspapers.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): Where is that paper published?

Mr. NEILL: I have only an obscure knowledge of this particular paper, but I think it is published in the city of Toronto. I wonder is that the same city that publishes the *Orange Sentinel*. It is, eh? Well, Mr. Speaker, that accounts for a whole lot, does it not? It is a surprising thing to me to find that a city that sends men here as able as the Toronto representatives, particularly the hon. member for Centre Toronto (Mr. Bristol)

and the hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Hocken), should be found lending its support to newspapers of this character. When the occasion offers I think I shall make it my business to visit the city of Toronto, and observe at first hand the habits and customs of this quaint and interesting people, with their strange weird newspapers. This particular editorial is a peculiar one. It is incorrect as to its facts, very muddy as to its logic, and faulty as to its grammar which one would not have expected. But it suggests that a dark conspiracy exists between myself and the members of the government in connection with my bringing in this resolution. Having a simple, innocent mind myself I cannot see where the conspiracy comes in, nor can I see any purpose or benefit to either party in a conspiracy of that kind. However, I can assure the House that before I put this notice on the order paper I had no communication whatever with any member of the government or even with any member of the House. If the *Toronto Mail and Empire* would believe me—but I suppose its mental efficiency has been so impaired by long years of narrow, partisan viewpoint that it is very difficult for it to do so—it might accept the very simple solution that I put this notice on the order paper because, as I represent the constituency farthest west in Canada and the one that would be almost certain to have to bear the brunt of any attack in case of a war on the Pacific, I deemed it my duty to lay the facts there before this House and before this parliament because when our hour of travail comes upon us I do not want my constituents to say, "Our representative knew of these conditions and failed to warn the public and parliament." I propose, therefore to transfer the responsibility in that regard to this House and to this government.

I wish to be particularly careful, in handling this matter, to do so from a non-partisan viewpoint, and for that reason I have been careful, not even to seek information as to the history of this or similar transactions in the past. I care not what Conservative or Liberal, in days gone by should or should not have done in this matter. We are living in the present and the future is our responsibility. "Let the dead past bury its dead". There is ample scope in this matter to enlist the very best abilities of both sides of the House, of all three parties in the House, in order that the government may be advised as to the adoption of a policy in the best interests of the country at large. I would suggest, if I might make the suggestion in a modest way, that a committee of this House—a small committee re-