

will be saved. Committees render it possible to place before Parliament as a whole in a certain, fixed and regulated way the questions that have been referred to the committee, thus avoiding in the House prolonged discussions of details.

With that end in view, Parliament has appointed this Committee, 28 in number. Rule No. 11 (the special rule of the House which provides for the appointment of Special Committees) provides, if I mistake not, that only 15 members of the House can be appointed to a Special Committee. In this particular case, that rule has been waived. There is also a rule of the House which says that in the absence of any regulation the quorum of the Committee should be a majority of its membership. As a consequence, the majority of this Committee would be 15, but perhaps you will agree with me, after giving this question due consideration, that 15 is too large a number to permit rapid progress and speedy results. I will therefore at a later date submit to you for your consideration the advisability of reducing the number constituting a quorum to 8 or 9 members, and in due course the matter will be submitted to the House of Commons for its approval.

You probably saw in the appointment of this Committee—which took place in the House on the 30th March last—what the objects of the Committee might be, and with what it had to deal. This Committee will deal with the questions of Pensions, Insurance and Civil Re-establishment.

Earlier activities of the Committee during the previous year have been tabulated in a somewhat brief form by the Secretary, Mr. Cloutier. I am going to ask Mr. Cloutier if he will submit to the hon. members this tabulation which he has prepared. There are members on this Committee who composed former committees and we will have the advantage of their advice and to those of us who are new I think that possibly at first we might better go into the past performances of the present Committee and also probably it would be as well for us to read the report which Mr. Cronyn, the past Chairman made last year and also his speech in the House, which will be found in Hansard of the 28th May last.

You will also note in the order appointing the Committee that this Committee has authority to call before it various persons to ask for various documents and to take evidence. I am sure that hon. members of the Committee will avail themselves of the assistance of the Pensions' Board and various other Boards constituted by Parliament and the assistance to be derived from the activities of these Boards will assist them in their deliberations of this year. We as hon. members of the Committee, will also realize that it will be necessary to call before us various other organizations, soldiers' organizations, war veterans' organizations, and possibly individual pensioners will be asked to appear before us. We will have to take evidence to determine exactly how these organizations shall deal with the soldiers and also have to hear, if need be, individual soldiers from time to time.

I think the hon. members will probably agree with me that we might with a great deal of use appoint a sub-committee for the purpose of hearing evidence and having it put before the Committee as a whole in probably some brief form but I do not intend with your permission to take up much of the time of the hon. members this morning on the question of the sub-organization committee. If you agree I think you will all possibly find that the best thing for us all to do is to familiarize ourselves in a measure with the past performances of the Committee and I will suggest later on the adjournment of this Committee till a later date when we will then take up the specific organization.

Hon. members I think will probably agree with me that we should appoint a vice-chairman of the Committee. That I will ask you to take up with the hon. members in due course.

There is little else gentlemen, that I need to say to you at the present time. I feel quite confident we will all work together with the utmost harmony, and I think we will work out those very important matters which will certainly come before us from time to time. I only want to repeat to you what I first said at the commence-