

## THE SENATE

Thursday, January 13, 1955

The Senate met at 3 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

Routine proceedings.

## DIVORCE

REPORT OF COMMITTEE CONCURRED IN

**Hon. Arthur W. Roebuck**, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Divorce, presented the first report of the committee.

*The report was read by the Clerk Assistant:*

1. Your committee recommends that their quorum be reduced to three members for all purposes, including the taking of evidence upon oath by the committee or any subcommittee as to the matters set forth in petitions for bills of divorce.

2. Your committee also recommends that leave, be given them to sit during all adjournments of the Senate, and also during sittings of the Senate.

3. Your committee further recommends that authority be granted for the appointment of as many subcommittees as deemed necessary by the committee for the purpose of hearing and inquiring into such petitions for divorce as may be referred to them by the Committee on Divorce. The subcommittee in each case to report their findings to the main committee.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, when shall this report be considered?

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** With leave, I move that the report be concurred in now.

Honourable senators, perhaps this is an appropriate time to make some comments. At its organization meeting this morning, the Committee on Divorce did me the honour of electing me as its chairman,—

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:**—for which I was duly grateful and appreciative.

May I say to the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Haig) that the members of the Committee on Divorce will not be taking a holiday on Monday and Tuesday next, but will be sitting every day next week and also the week following, and perhaps for a number of other weeks as well; yes—and sometimes perhaps on Saturdays. Already 334 petitions have been filed. There are open files—by that I mean that notice has been given by publication in the *Canada Gazette*—of 409 petitions. So I think that we are assured of the largest docket that has ever come before the Divorce Committee for consideration. Last session we heard 145 cases

before Christmas. This session we are starting later, with a larger number of cases to deal with.

Honourable senators may have noted that we ask for certain rights and privileges for the committees. We recommend a quorum of three senators to hear evidence on the general committee or on any subcommittee. I am sure that the house will be interested to know that we now have an arrangement for the sitting of four sub-committees—really four divorce courts operating simultaneously—every day next week, and for as many weeks as may be necessary to dispose of the docket. Some 72 cases are ready for hearing this coming week, 13 on Monday, 17 on Tuesday, 15 on Wednesday, and so forth. These cases will be heard by subcommittees who will report the facts to the general committee, and in turn the general committee will make its recommendation to the house.

At the close of last session I thanked the members of the Divorce Committee for their very good attendance during the session. I think it remarkable that with a total membership of about twenty, and frequently with four sub-committees sitting, there was not a single occasion when we had to adjourn for lack of a quorum. This indicated a strong sense of responsibility and devotion to duty by the entire membership of the Committee.

I look forward to the completion of a rather strenuous job. It is not one that we have asked for, but since it is our obligation we hope to do it with the utmost devotion, care and responsibility. Thank you.

**Hon. John T. Haig:** Honourable senators, before making a few remarks I should like to ask a question of the Chairman of the Divorce Committee (Hon. Mr. Roebuck). How many cases are set down for Monday next?

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** There will be thirteen cases heard on Monday.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** By how many subcommittees?

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** Four subcommittees.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** Honourable senators, I do not rise to criticize the Chairman of the Divorce Committee or the work done by his committee. On the contrary, I was too long a member of that committee to have anything but admiration for its chairman and its work. I think all those who serve on the committee make a sacrifice that is made by none of the other members of this house. However, I should like to make a point quite apart from any possible criticism. We do