

in his department; but it has never been the practice for the departmental messenger to come and do duty in the House of Commons as well. There are good reasons for that as hon. gentlemen can well see. While the Prime Minister is at the House his office in the department must be left open and various duties there necessitate the attendance of a messenger.

Mr. McMASTER: I wish to make a suggestion although it may not be perfectly in order. Some of the pages have not been in bed at all to-day, and therefore the Speaker or the Serjeant-at-Arms should direct that they be sent home. Temporarily, in their absence, we can minister to our own necessities.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Serjeant-at-Arms informs me that the younger pages are sent home not later than 9.30 o'clock each evening. Last evening four of the older pages were on duty and to-day they had ample opportunity to rest.

* Mr. McMASTER: The House adjourned this morning at half past six, and the pages had to report for duty before it re-assembled. I think the little lads should be in bed. I say that as the father of a family.

Mr. SPEAKER: I move that the number of two be changed to seven in accordance with the explanation I gave a short time ago.

Mr. ANDERSON: I would like to know what action is being taken in connection with the messengers in the restaurant.

Mr. SPEAKER: This service is under the Serjeant-at-Arms and has nothing whatever to do with the restaurant.

Mr. ANDERSON: May I ask why the number of messengers should be increased from two to seven?

Mr. SPEAKER: "Two" was a clerical error. Provision was originally made for seven confidential messengers and it is now reduced to four.

ELECTRICIAN (VACANCY).

Mr. BUREAU: Who is to fill that vacancy?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Serjeant-at-Arms informs me that it may not be necessary to fill this vacancy. In view of the complicated nature of the electrical equipment of the House it is considered that it may be better to continue its operation in the hands of the expert who is already in

[Mr. Speaker.]

charge. The position may therefore remain vacant unless some occasion arises for filling it.

SUPERVISOR OF CHAR SERVICE— PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.

Mr. BUREAU: Is this position held by a lady?

Mr. SPEAKER: No, it is held by a man, Mr. Letourneau.

Mr. McMASTER: I do not know whether I am in order—I think I am in this case—but in connection with the pages, ever since I entered the House I have not liked the spectacle which is always presented as the evening grows late, of little boys being on duty who certainly should be in bed. I do not know whether the Serjeant-at-Arms, or whoever is responsible, sees that the pages get their schooling properly, but I do not think that they should be on duty after ten o'clock. It is not proper for a country which has enacted factory legislation forbidding night work to juveniles, to have juveniles doing night work in our principal legislative hall, and I would like to express the view that no boys under sixteen at least should be on duty after ten o'clock at night. During the earlier hours we can avail ourselves of the services of the pages, which we highly appreciate, but after ten o'clock at night we could deliver our own notes and do for ourselves whatever else we require. I would strongly impress my own personal view—and I would imagine the view of most members of the House if they ever thought about it—that it is very unfitting to have little lads of sixteen and under working until midnight, and even later, and then going home in the dark. It cannot be a good thing for the boys themselves, and I am strongly of the opinion that the internal economy of this House should be so arranged that no children of sixteen and under would be on duty after ten o'clock at night.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have no fault to find with the remarks of the hon. member except that it involves laying hands upon a time-honoured institution more or less revered, and there is always some good reason why a system which has been in vogue for over fifty years should continue. It is true that on occasions, when the House sits late at night there is, perhaps, hardship for the pages, or at least a few of them. But this matter was gone over very carefully some two years ago by Dr. Putman, Supervisor of Schools in the city, who had some such idea as has been expressed by the hon. member, and after the most care-