

Supply—Trade and Commerce

his interest in research apparently has missed the attention of the hon. member for Broadview. Then in 1953 a second committee on atomic energy dealt with research in that most important field.

In his opening remarks the hon. member for Broadview attempted to show that there has been reluctance on the part of the minister and the government to bring forward the motion to set up this committee because of some suggestion that an amendment would be moved. I would assure the hon. member for Broadview and the hon. member for Lambton West that that is the first suggestion I have heard of any such proposal. It was complete news to the minister and it was not a matter that had been placed before the house, as has been pointed out by the leader of the house. I must say that I did hear some rumours that there was disagreement among the opposition as to just what should be done and that that was the reason why the members who discussed with the house leader the question of the business of the house were not pressing to have this resolution dealt with.

Mr. Murphy (Lambton West): Mr. Chairman, I rise on a question of privilege. I know the senior member for Halifax would not want the record to be not factual and perhaps I might be permitted to state what I understood took place. When the senior member for Halifax was speaking about these other committees, that was all right because he was not dealing with a committee on research generally. I may say that I had something to do with drawing up the terms of reference, but the ones I drew up granted the power to send for and examine papers and persons.

I discussed this with the member on the government side who I expected would be the chairman, as he had been the chairman of the other committees which the senior member for Halifax has just referred to, and at that time I indicated that we intended to call witnesses and during the Easter recess we could inform them if he would let me know that this would be arranged. I may say that I was asked to give the names of the witnesses I proposed calling, to the prospective chairman who represents an Ottawa riding, and he had the list of witnesses that I mentioned this morning when I spoke.

I would have thought that the senior member for Halifax, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, would have been aware of what had taken place between his colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa West, and myself.

Mr. Dickey: No, I was not aware of that.
[Mr. Dickey.]

The Chairman: Perhaps I am at fault in not rising earlier, but it seems to me that this discussion is purely procedural. It might be better if we discussed the item under consideration.

Mr. Dickey: Mr. Chairman, I have no desire to prolong the discussion except that this was raised by the hon. member for Broadview in a way which I thought required some answer. As all hon. members know, the committee work during this session has been extraordinarily heavy. I know from personal knowledge gained from dealing with this matter that there was a period of four to five weeks when the names of members from the government side were ready but we were waiting for the names from the opposition side.

Mr. Green: That is not correct.

Mr. Dickey: It is to my knowledge that the day after the names were submitted by the opposition this resolution went on the order paper. The undertaking given to the house by the Minister of Trade and Commerce to which reference has been made was that this committee would be proposed, and the committee was proposed. To my knowledge we were prepared at all times to proceed with setting up the committee whenever the business of the house permitted.

The Chairman: I think I should insist a little more strenuously that, after all, this discussion is purely procedural and we should discuss the item before the committee.

Mr. Dickey: The hon. member for Lambton West did deal to some extent with research and the importance of research. I am sure that all hon. members of the committee will recognize from what has been said in the house on a number of occasions by the Minister of Trade and Commerce and others that this is a very important subject. The hon. member for Lambton West says it is important that Canadian research be accelerated. I can assure the committee and the hon. member that that has been going on in this country for a good many years.

The hon. member for Lambton West said that in the opinion of a good many authorities Canada lags behind in research. I am sure that those authorities are not referring to several important areas of research when they make a statement of that kind. I am sure that if they know the facts they are not referring to the field of government research. The level of government research in Canada compares favourably with that of any other country in the world. At the present time the federal government is spending about \$70 million a year for