

*Select Standing Committees*

meetings of any of the standing committees, except for organization purposes, until after the Easter adjournment. That meant that when we got down to business toward the end of the session there were a great many committees meeting at the same time. Most of us were on two, three or four of them, so that it was impossible for us to attend them all. That is the position I was placed in, and of course the same applied to other hon. members.

Now, we have wasted a good deal of time during the present session without doing very much committee work. I am on three committees this year, and none of them has so far met. I presume that this session will travel along in the same old way; that there will be no meetings of these committees until after the Easter adjournment. If it could be possible for the government to get down to a business basis and have the committees start their work right at the beginning of the session, then we might be able to avoid the duplication of sittings that we have always experienced.

So far as the number on the committees is concerned, I do not think it will make very much difference if the number is reduced. I question whether this resolution, if passed, could accomplish anything. I do suggest, however, that the government might do something to expedite the work of the committees. I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) the other day if we were going to have any committee meetings before the Easter adjournment, and he told me he thought that that was a matter for the members of the committees. He suggested that if I happened to be on a committee and thought that that committee should be at work, it was for me to take the matter up with the whip—government whip, I presume—and see that the committee got down to work. I do not know that I am supposed to be a supervisor of the government whip, or to dictate in any way to the government or to the chairmen of committees as to when they shall start their business. I think if I went to any chairman of a committee and tried to dictate to him, he would immediately tell me to mind my own business. But in my capacity as a member of this House, I think it is only my duty to state my views as to the meetings of committees, and I do recommend that something be done to get our committees working earlier in the session.

Mr. J. L. BROWN (Lisgar): I am sure we are all anxious to facilitate the progress of business through the House, and since coming here I have very frequently felt as the hon. [Mr. McQuarrie.]

member for New Westminster (Mr. McQuarrie) has done, that we do not get down to the business of committees early enough. I know that certainly some of the business that comes before some of the committees might just as well be brought before them earlier in the session; on the other hand, there is some business that cannot be brought before the committees until the House has been in session for a certain length of time. However, I shall not enter into a discussion of this matter at any length. It has already been indicated that there is perhaps a better method of our dealing with this subject than taking a vote in the House upon it at the present time. A committee was promised, and I think very properly, earlier in the session, and I think has already been appointed, to consider the advisability of revising the rules of the House. That, of course, refers to procedure of both the House and the committees, and in view of that fact, I would move the following amendment to the resolution, seconded by the hon. member for Battle River (Mr. Spencer):

That all the words after the word "House" in the second line be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

The question of revising the membership of select standing committees so as to secure more regular attendance and promote greater efficiency should be referred to the special committee already appointed to consider the advisability of revising the rules of the House, and that the said committee be requested to report upon the said matter during the present session.

Mr. GRAHAM: Might I suggest to the hon. member that in order to have his motion in conformity with the one naming the committee, it should read "the special committee appointed to consider jointly with Mr. Speaker."

Mr. BROWN: Yes, I move accordingly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. GOOD: Before the question is put, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say that I am entirely in accord with the amendment. I think it is the proper procedure under the circumstances. I only desire to say that the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Church) has already four resolutions on the order paper for private members' day, and he has I think disposed of another one; so that if he is very anxious to get rid of private members' day, he perhaps can help in that direction as much as anybody else.

In regard to the remarks of the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. McQuarrie), I am afraid that the earlier meeting of committees will not wholly solve the difficulty that I mentioned. When two or three important