

*Establishment of New Departments*

there. He is the man I want to talk to, not some parliamentary secretary. If the minister is not present then the committee should adjourn. What is the point of meeting and just talking to the four walls? It is the minister who is responsible for the work of his department and it is to him members want to talk.

In addition, at committee meetings certain officials on the administrative staffs of branches should be present. If that were done, then all three branches of government would be concentrated in a committee and a subject could be discussed meaningfully. The order of business would be worked out ahead of time.

• (7:40 p.m.)

Each particular member would know well in advance what subjects would be discussed and the work would be divided up logically. Different persons would be responsible to lead off in discussion, and they would be prepared, whether it was in respect of estimates or any other subject. However, there now is no such organization back of committee. The member receives a notice to attend at a certain time; you go and there is not a quorum. I went to a committee the other day and sat there for half an hour; there still was not a quorum and we had to go out and shanghai another representative in order to make up a quorum.

It is clear to anyone that the problem of making these committees work is one which involves giving to the members of parliament who are sent here an opportunity to get their ideas across to the minister who is responsible and to the administrative officials in the various departments; in other words, the members wish to get together with the ministers and their officials to hear what is being done in their particular departments. They also want the opportunity to discuss with the minister the financing and so on of the particular department, rather than with somebody else, because the minister is responsible.

I should like to say that any minister who is running a department of government should welcome the opportunity to have 10 or 15 members of parliament meet with him and with certain members of his executive where they could have an opportunity to sit around together and talk. Of course, it all would be taken down and so on; but out of that discussion the minister would receive a tremendous benefit. I say to the Minister of Forestry and the Minister of Labour, as the ministers who are here now and who may be

[Mr. Kindt.]

leading in the discussion on this, that if they are going to make this parliament work, and satisfy the members, they must get down to the fundamentals of what will retain the interest of individual members. The 60,000 people who sent me down here did not send me here to talk to four walls in a committee room without the minister being there; not on your life. The minister too does not have enough time at any other period to listen to my words on this, that or any other thing. If I or any other of the 15 members who might be on the committee have any contribution to make on the subject of his department, the time to do so would be when they are called together and the minister is there in front of them.

I would suggest that if this type of organization was set up, it would be the obligation of the minister to be present whenever a committee meeting is held. If that were done, it would solve the problem of attendance, of a quorum, and every other thing. I would go one step further. I would give the members a couple of chances and then if they did not attend, except in cases of illness or something like that, they would be taken off the committee and somebody else put on in their place; you have to be a little more strict and a little more tough. It is a little like the sap in the tree: It flows both ways, from the cabinet minister to the members and back. The executive also benefits, and everyone is stimulated. If you harmonize those people and bring them together under one committee set-up, you will receive the best co-operation from members of parliament and, in addition, you will get the various parts of government fitting properly together.

In respect of the suggestion that this matter be submitted to the Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts, I should like to say that I do not think that is the place to submit it. I think it should be sent to some special committee composed of members of this house who have had some experience at least in making committees work; it should consist of representatives of the various parties. They could then bring in a suggestion to the government containing changes which would improve the order of business and the type of business.

I am certain—with all due respect—that if the ministers who are in the front benches were to take this up and seriously consider it, they would find that the members of this parliament would be more behind what they are doing, would be more cognizant of the action they are taking, more appreciative of