

the Leader of the Government? I should like to know if it is in order not only for a minister, but also for his officials, to attend a meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: I think I can answer that question.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: It has never been done.

Hon. Mr. Haig: In my experience it never was a success. One of the difficulties is that we cannot get close enough to the problem in the Committee of the Whole. In a standing committee those senators who are eminent members of the legal profession, and whose opinions are respected, can exchange their views with our Law Counsel. That discussion takes place right in front of the members of the committee. It seems to me there are one or two questions on this bill which ought to be settled. For instance, I am anxious to clear up the question about liens on grain.

Hon. Mr. Farris: The witnesses cannot testify in Committee of the Whole.

Hon. Mr. Stambaugh: Honourable senators, on several occasions that I can recall we have had a Committee of the Whole, and on one occasion I myself moved that the house go into Committee of the Whole. My memory is that it was quite successful, and that everybody had a clear understanding of what was taking place.

If a minister can attend at a standing committee, why can he not come here for a Committee of the Whole? Many ministers have been here before.

Many honourable senators seem to feel there is practically only one committee, namely, the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce, and the house sends most important bills to that committee. True, there is no standing committee on agriculture, but the custom has been to send agricultural bills to the Committee on Natural Resources, which is certainly nearer to agriculture than the Banking and Commerce Committee. This bill proposes to take business away from the banks and perhaps that is the reason why some honourable senators want to send it to the Banking and Commerce Committee. In any event, the appropriate committee, if the bill is not to go to the Committee of the Whole, is the Committee on Natural Resources.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: Honourable senators, the honourable senator from Huron-Perth (Hon. Mr. Golding) asked whether the officials of a department can come to this chamber and be asked questions and give answers directly. There is no provision in our rules for such procedure. The only

person who could come here would be a minister, and that would be on invitation, for the purpose of explaining one of his bills.

Hon. Mr. Croll: Surely the honourable senator must be mistaken. I recall in the pipe line we had a deputy minister here to answer questions.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: Excuse me, but my memory is perhaps a little fresher on that point than is my honourable friend's, for I piloted that bill through the house. The departmental official came here and sat in front of me, and on any of the questions which I could not answer I consulted with him and then gave the answer. The honourable senator from Huron-Perth wanted to know if officials could answer questions directly here.

Hon. Mr. Golding: No, no, honourable senators, that is not what I meant at all. I was long enough in the House of Commons to know that officials could come into the house but could not answer the questions. They gave the answer to the minister, and he gave it to the chamber. That is exactly the practice which I think could be adopted here. That is, officials could come into the chamber but they could not answer questions; they could give advice to the minister, and he would answer questions. Am I not right in that?

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: Oh, yes.

Hon. Mr. Golding: That is the question I wanted answered.

Hon. Mr. Reid: Honourable senators, while I was in favour of the motion for reference to the Committee of the Whole, I have to admit that in the standing committee we can ask questions directly of officials, whereas in the Committee of the Whole the minister becomes the mouthpiece of the officials. When a question is asked in Committee of the Whole the minister consults the official and then passes the official's answer back to us. That practice curtails debate.

Hon. Mr. Paterson: Is it the intention of the Leader of the Government to have the three officials available in the standing committee?

Hon. Mr. Haig: Oh, yes. I have informed the minister, the deputy minister and the solicitor of the department that we wish to have them attend the committee meeting, and they have all said they will come. In the Manitoba Legislature we had the same arrangement as we have here. When we were discussing the principle of a bill we went into Committee of the Whole, but when a bill was to be redrafted or clauses might