

report back to this house. I need hardly say that the sending of troops overseas in peacetime is a new procedure for Canada. Although such a step may meet with the general approval of the Canadian people, it is an important one, as was so eloquently stated by the seconder of the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne (Hon. Mr. Wood), and will have far-reaching consequences.

I am sure all honourable senators would wish that the excellent services of the Finance Committee be continued. We are unable to refer the estimates to that committee at the present moment for, as far as I know, there will be no estimates before the house. We are fortunate, however, in having the Public Accounts for the past year printed. I shall table these, and suggest that they be referred to the Finance Committee, with perhaps some specific recommendations as to the matters to be inquired into and reported upon.

While I cannot assure the house of the complete success of this new procedure, it will at least be an answer to two problems presented to me: first, that we should have more time to consider and study legislation; and second, that the fifty-one members nominated to the three committees will have something for which I have been continually asked, namely, more work. I have every reason to believe that there will be considerable opportunity for work by the three committees.

It has been my experience in the Senate, that whenever a standing committee or a special committee undertook to do a job, it was well done. As I approach the reference of the subjects I have mentioned to the committees specified I have every confidence that the work performed will be of the same high quality as the work of the committees of this house in the past.

Hon. John T. Haig: Honourable members, I will not delay the house for more than a few moments.

My friend from Ponteix (Hon. Mr. Marcotte) just asked me whether a senator would serve on only one committee. The answer is "no". Apart from the six committees which the honourable leader has specified, the other standing committees namely Banking and Commerce, Private Bills, Internal Economy, Debates and Reporting, Divorce, Restaurant, Civil Service Administration, Public Health and Welfare, Public Buildings and Grounds, and Tourist Traffic will all remain as they were, and members will be appointed to them in the usual manner.

The honourable leader of the government said, there would be coming to this house four pieces of legislation affecting railways

and based on the report of the Royal Commission on Transportation. As I understand the procedure proposed, following some preliminary discussion in the other house these pieces of legislation will be referred to the Standing Committee on Transportation in this house, before which all delegates who wish to make representations may appear. I understand that the government leader (Hon. Mr. Robertson) is quite willing that any or all of the seventeen members on the committee on transportation should attend meetings of the like committee in the other place, listen to its proceedings, take part if they want to.

Hon. Mr. Robertson:—and examine witnesses.

Hon. Mr. King: That is in accordance with the present rule. There is nothing new about that.

Hon. Mr. Haig: May I explain to my honourable friend from Kootenay East (Hon. Mr. King) that I was answering a question, and trying to avoid any misunderstanding. He and I had the pleasure of attending the sessions of the Committee on Transportation, and we know what went on there. What I am saying is for the information of those who were not present at those meetings. I hope there will be no misapprehensions, because the experiment is worth trying, and I should like the house to be unanimously in favour of it. When the four bills dealing with railway matters come here from the other place, they will, of course, be introduced, receive first and second readings, and go to our Transportation and Communications Committee. My suggestion, which I believe is acceptable to all members of the house, is that when bills of this type are reported back from committee they should be referred to Committee of the Whole House. One difficulty about this has been that it is practically impossible for one minister, even with the assistance on occasion of deputy ministers, to cope with the details of all legislation sponsored by some nineteen ministers in another place. The railway bills, however, could be dealt with by a committee of seventeen members who know the subject-matter, who have discussed the bills, examined the witnesses, and therefore are fully informed; and those honourable senators who, not being members of the committee, might lack information as to this legislation could address questions to their colleagues who are members of the committee.

Such a system would provide, what hitherto has been sorely lacking, a public, informed discussion of legislation. It is true that we discuss bills in committee, but nobody knows about it except the members of the committee themselves. If the discussion is