

Personnel Changes in Standing Committees

opposition or the New Democratic party. These names are transmitted to him from these parties, and he makes the motion as the chief government whip. It has been an established tradition that each party decides its own members to serve on the standing committees.

● (3:20 p.m.)

If these motions are to be debatable in the future, and if this convention is to be destroyed, then it will be open to a member on this side of the house to oppose the membership of a committee proposed by the N.D.P.—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. MacEachen:—and it will also be open to members of the official opposition to rise and oppose our membership. I repeat that it will be open for members on this side to oppose the nominees. We have accepted this convention. It is reflected in the motions made by the chief government whip. The member for York-Humber is no longer a member of the Liberal caucus, and surely it is open to the government party to decide the membership representing the government party on the committees.

It seems to me very, very strange for the house leader of the official opposition to raise his voice on this motion, because it is not so long since the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) withdrew from the Conservative caucus, and what happened? On March 1 the chief government whip moved a motion removing the hon. member for Winnipeg North South from the standing committee—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacEachen:—Winnipeg South Centre. Let me read the motion. It is to be found in *Votes and Proceedings* for March 1, 1968, as follows:

On motion of Mr. Pilon, seconded by Mr. Matheson, it was ordered,—That the name of Mr. MacRae be substituted for that of Mr. Churchill on the standing committee on national defence.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Harkness: I wonder if the minister—

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I have the floor.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Mr. MacEachen: On March 8 a further motion was moved by the chief government whip:

That the name of Mr. Rapp be substituted for that of Mr. Churchill on the standing committee on standing orders.

However the circumstances developed, in that either the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre himself decided he would no longer represent the Conservative party or the Conservative party itself decided that the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre would no longer be on the committees, at any rate it is undoubtedly the case, I would presume, that the opposition whip conveyed the selection of the new committee members, in substitution for the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, to the government chief whip. I have no complaint about that because that is the convention that has been observed in this house ever since I have been here, and I believe that on a former occasion when a member from the N.D.P. withdrew from that party a similar series of events came into play.

Mr. Lewis: Without disagreeing with what the minister has said—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Do I understand that the hon. member for Calgary North wants to ask a question?

Mr. Harkness: I would like to make a comment.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary North.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I have not yielded the floor. I was going to accept a question from the hon. member for York South.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Is the hon. member for York South rising for the purpose of asking a question?

Mr. Lewis: I was going to ask a question of the minister. I was going to say to the minister that without disagreeing with the principle he indicated, would the minister inform the house what likelihood there is of any of the committees with which this motion is concerned actually meeting between now and the end of this session?

Mr. MacEachen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer the question, but I expect that the broadcasting committee is to meet—