

look at the budgets of all committees. Each committee has a budget for calling witnesses. If a committee has a sufficient budget, it can call witnesses within that budget. However, it would be an abuse of the process, and what we are trying to do around here, if every appointee to every committee were invited to appear before the committee.

Lastly, I would point out that only yesterday the *Toronto Star*, which does not exactly support our Party in every case, drew to the attention of the Ontario Liberal Party that the federal Government has an appointments review process in existence which was brought in by this Government under parliamentary reform, and we make no apologies for bringing in what this Hon. Member never brought in at all when he was in Government.

Mr. Gauthier: You are making a farce out of it.

Mr. Lewis: It is a lot of nonsense that all of a sudden it is a breach of privilege to have the right to review appointments, which was never given under the previous Government.

Mr. Gauthier: So what is your argument?

Mr. Lewis: That is nonsense and everyone in this House knows it. Me thinks thou doth protest too much.

We submit that every committee of this House is the master of its own destiny and that a full committee has a right to take what the subcommittee suggests and either endorse it or change it. That is the process which has been in existence since I have been here. It is just a continuation of the process, and I submit there is absolutely no abuse of privilege.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the Liaison Committee and someone who has served as a chairman of a Standing Committee since the election of this particular Parliament. I am pleased in a sense that the issue has been raised because I believe we do need opportunities in the House to address the new rules, the purposes which brought them into existence and the possible consequences for the future and for the welfare of Canadians which can come out of the process of parliamentary reform.

It seems to me that the principle that committees must remain masters of their own destiny is a very important principle. The House should be very careful about going back to a system which really existed before, which is that the House had to rule on the activities which would engage the committee. Outside of Main Estimates, most of the committee in this House had no permanent standing reference. If we were to adopt the principle, which I think is implicit in the submission of the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps), that the House should determine, or you, Mr. Speaker, as the Speaker should determine the activities that a committee must engage in, we would really be taking a step backward from the notion of reform.

There are clear indications that the workload for different committees is of a very different order. However, there is a responsibility, I think particularly in the first two or three

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years of the new parliamentary rules, for committees to look very carefully at two things, both the opportunity and the responsibility to develop policy, to assert it to the House and to the Government, and to have the Government forced to respond to the policy ideas of Members who have taken the time and trouble to inquire into policy matters in detail. That is one sense of responsibility. The other is really the oversight responsibility. I think we often think of that as the financial oversight responsibility, but it includes the oversight responsibility in relation to appointments to boards and commissions.

I think of my own committee which has a lot of Crown corporations, bodies and appointments which are referred to it. It would be conceivable that my committee, for instance, if it were to examine each and every one of them, could spend four, five or six meetings a week and several times the allotted budgetary amount, simply to look at that particular responsibility of oversight. Instead, representatives from all three committees up to this point have decided that the policy development phase of our activities is the most important part of what we wish to do on behalf of the Parliament of Canada and the Canadian people. We have chosen to use our scarce resources to advance that cause.

I would hate to see any sense of principle enunciated in this Chamber which would take that right and responsibility away from the Members which this Chamber saw fit to appoint to the committee. Therefore, I would urge you, Mr. Speaker, to take that line of reasoning into account in whatever ruling you might be prepared to make in relation to this particular point.

Mr. A. H. Harry Brightwell (Perth): Mr. Speaker, I attended the committee meeting in question last night as an alternate. I am not a regular member of that committee. I was astounded to see that a committee was thinking about talking to 16 people. However, it was explained to me that it did not really expect 16 people to attend—perhaps they would not be available that day. So the committee was really only expecting to see a small group of that 16.

I rise to put on record this fact. One of the Hon. Members opposite who spoke in favour of this point of privilege stated on the record of the committee that he was prepared to bring Canadians here from right across Canada, sit them in a committee room and give them a two-minute examination. That is simply an abuse I could not countenance, and I made a strong protest at that point.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think you very generously allowed the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) to make a point of privilege. I submit it is not a point of privilege. It is not even a point of order. Without getting into the issue *per se*, I submit in support of my colleagues that this is a committee issue. The committee has certain powers, obligations and responsibilities and, as has been said earlier, it clearly is master of its own House. In the true spirit of parliamentary reform, I think that has to be considered as well, because if the committee has more powers and more