

what would make a good working committee and quorum, and we adopted his recommendations which were supported by the Clerk of Committees, Mr. Todd. I think that the committee arrangement which we have to-day is probably just about as unworkable as you could get. For instance, two weeks ago Tuesday morning I was summoned to attend four different committees meeting at the same hour, and I am satisfied that many other hon. members of the House received similar notices. The impossibility of attending several different committees meeting simultaneously is apparent, and I cannot see what good it is going to do any member to be on a lot of committees which he cannot possibly attend. Under this new rule members will be able to attend their committees.

In regard to the quorum, there was a good deal of objection three or four sessions ago to the quorum being made only a small number, because that would allow a few members to get together and put things through which did not have the approval of the majority of the committee. For ten or twelve members to form the quorum of a committee of well over one hundred is a pretty small proportion, and it is a little dangerous. I think the quorum should be kept up to between one-quarter and one-third the membership of the committee. I believe that this recommendation coming from the committee will give every member of the House the opportunity to get on the one committee he most desires to be on, and the privilege, possibly the duty, of being on a second committee. I feel that that is as good an arrangement as we have had suggested up to the present time, and I recommend its adoption.

Mr. McLEAN (Melfort): I should like to endorse the suggestions of the hon. member for Comox-Alberni. I would be almost inclined to go further than he does and allow every member of the House to take part in the discussions of any committee. Perhaps that would not be practicable, but I do not see any reason why any member of the House should not be allowed to speak in any committee. In the short time I have been in this House I have noticed that the more work that is done in committee, the less discussion there is when the measure comes back to the House. The work done in committee is not so spectacular, but it is much more useful. I do not see any good reason for cutting down the size of committees, because it would only result in throwing upon the members more work that would have to be done in this chamber. I remember last year a very respected member of this House,

[Mr. Kellner.]

the father of the House, advancing an argument in committee, and someone objected to him speaking in the committee, and wanted to force a vote. His reply was, "I will speak here or somewhere else where you will have to listen to me." I notice that members who thresh out a question in committee spend much less time discussing it in the House.

I think the objection raised by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni to committee work as it is done at present is valid, and that more work might be done on Fridays and Mondays. I was present at a committee meeting this morning, and we are meeting again on Monday morning. I believe that a great deal more committee work could be done on Friday; on Monday many members are away.

As to limiting a member of the House to serving on two committees, I again endorse what has been said by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni. That proposal is not fair to members of the House. Many constituencies are interested in more than one subject. I represent a constituency myself that is vitally interested in agriculture, in forestry, in fishing, in minerals, and in finance. Why should not their representative in this House have the right to represent them on the various committees dealing with these matters?

Mr. BROWN: The hon. member for Comox-Alberni has raised the objection in regard to reducing the size of the committees and of the quorum required, that it might be harder to get the required percentage of the committee than under the present conditions. It seems to me the very fact that the number of members of the several committees is reduced means that there will be more members available to attend those particular committees, and of itself justifies raising the quorum.

Mr. NEILL: It will be easier to secure the attendance of twenty than of ten members?

Mr. BROWN: I think my argument will appeal to a mathematical mind.

Mr. NEILL: Then it must be a very astute one. I cite the case of the agriculture committee, where the old quorum was ten, now it is to be twenty. It will be easier to secure the attendance of twenty than of ten?

An hon. MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. NEILL: That is a species of higher mathematics beyond me.

Mr. BROWN: I repeat my argument. It will be possible because there will be more