

Personnel Changes in Standing Committees

Mr. Starr: The government's action has not helped to expedite the business of the house. Because the government party has removed from its ranks a member of this house and has at the same time taken him off five committees of the house, we have been led into a situation where 45 minutes of the time of this house has been wasted in arguing the motion.

What crime did this member commit, Mr. Speaker? He used his common sense and judgment and voted against the tax increase. For that reason he was thrown out of the party. I just want to bring to the government's attention the fact that on the original bill the hon. member for York North (Mr. Addison) voted against the government on second reading, and he was not thrown out. There must be discrimination in the Liberal party.

We are all grateful to the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) who pointed a finger at the Minister of Justice (Mr. Trudeau) this afternoon. The minister's mask was torn off to reveal a childish, snarling man.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Starr: It is only fair that we should hear this afternoon from the hon. member for York-Humber. I understand he is to speak. I suggest that after he has spoken we move the adjournment of this debate so we can get on with the business of the country.

Mr. R. W. Prittie (Burnaby-Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I am not opposed to this motion to replace the hon. member for York-Humber on five committees, but this gives me an opportunity to point out one or two aspects of our committee operations.

Two of the five committees the hon. member for York-Humber is on, the committee on printing and the committee on the parliamentary restaurant, do not meet very frequently. The three others, the committees on health and welfare, broadcasting and veterans affairs, are reasonably active. The hon. member for Timiskaming has said that the hon. member for York-Humber has been faithful in attending committees. He has not been so faithful at the committee on broadcasting in the past three weeks simply because he is a member of the committee on health and welfare at the same time. He has been in the health committee fighting abortion and he could not get to the broadcasting committee.

My remarks do not apply to the hon. member for York-Humber alone. Many members are on the two committees I have just spoken

[Mr. Starr.]

of and on other committees. As a consequence, for the past three weeks in the broadcasting committee we have frequently wasted an hour a day, half an hour in the morning and another half an hour in the afternoon, waiting for quorums because members are at other committee meetings. There has been the added annoyance of having members drift in to the second committee an hour or an hour and a half after it has begun and begin a line of questioning which has already been dealt with, so they take up even more time.

I suggest that if we cannot arrange a different timetable for committees, a member should be on one committee only. They could then meet regularly and we could get a great deal more work done than at present. I say without hesitation that many times during the past three weeks one hour a day has been wasted in the broadcasting committee simply because members have been at the health and welfare committee, the public accounts committee or some other committee.

Mr. Ralph Cowan (York-Humber): Mr. Speaker, I only wish to take a moment or two on this motion, and I only want to refer briefly to the committee on the parliamentary restaurant. I regret very much being removed from that committee because I thought I had earned a permanent position there because in 1963, when the committee was fearful about trying to collect outstanding accounts of some \$8,800, I did so; and my collection included a remittance of over \$800 from a Liberal cabinet minister and \$1,100 from the chairman of the Liberal caucus.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Cowan: I thought my actions in 1963 had earned me permanent membership on the restaurant committee.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I think one or two comments ought to be made because the motion the house is now asked to deal with is a manifestation of one of the conventions that have been observed in the house for many years.

Each party is entitled to determine its representation on the standing committees. That has been well established. When the chief government whip rises in the house to move motions affecting hon. members of other parties in the house, he does not decide the committee membership for the official