

and we would get a most efficient consideration of the work of the committee, if this can be carried out.

That is the reason why the committee asks for authority from the Senate to sit even though the Senate adjourns for more than one week. Under the present Rule 85, we cannot sit if the Senate adjourns for more than one week. For example, if tomorrow or Friday we were to adjourn for a longer period than one week, with the suspension of the rule the Finance Committee could sit next Tuesday and similarly from week to week.

I realize there are some disadvantages. I realize that there are some senators who would like to be at meetings of the Finance Committee, and if the Senate does not sit it would be difficult for them to be there. However, there are some offsetting factors. The proceedings are all being printed and will be made available as rapidly as possible to the members of the committee. The present meetings are of a preliminary character, and it is my view that when we come to meetings dealing with the report itself those meetings will be held when the Senate is sitting, so at that time all members will have an opportunity to deal with the report itself, review all the evidence that has been heard and, of course, recall any witness of whom they want to ask further questions.

There is also an advantage, in a way, in having a meeting, say, next week. Many senators are here as a result of having been called back this week and will stay on without going home if there is an interregnum of one week.

Honourable senators, that is the main reason for the report. The other section is a

matter of form. The present quorum is nine members. The suggestion of making it seven is done through an abundance of caution, as the lawyers say. On the theory that if nine is the right figure when the Senate is in session, seven might be appropriate in regard to a period when the Senate is not sitting. Also, it will make the task of the chairman a little easier if, no matter what the circumstances, he can count on seven at least. I myself think there would be many more than seven, but nevertheless out of an abundance of caution I would suggest we make it seven.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): We are most grateful to honourable Senator Leonard, who has explained this motion in a very clear way. He has pointed to the important work it is proposed to do in the Finance Committee.

It is worth saying here that very often the work done in committees of this honourable house is as important as that done by the house itself. We should give more attention and attach more importance to the work of our committees than we have been disposed to do. Certainly, the outside public has a very high idea of the value of the work of Senate committees.

In acceding to the proposal before us now we are reinforcing that view in saying that we intend to maintain the high reputation which these committees enjoy and that this is something we should all support.

Report adopted.

The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 3 p.m.