

session? At eleven o'clock in the morning the then Minister of Pensions and National Health (Mr. Power) brought in the report of the elections committee. The late member for St. Lawrence-St. George (Mr. Cahan) discussed the report and no one else was given a chance to say a word; the chairman got up and moved the adjournment of the debate and prevented further discussion. That was the last we heard of that report until an hour or two before the close of the session, when no one could speak on it.

See how we have dealt with the Canadian National railways. Once we divest ourselves of powers and functions that is the last of it. Very little was heard about the committee on agriculture or the grain committee after these references to committees. Another point is that when these matters are referred to these committees no action can be taken in this house because of the rule of anticipation.

This government has been very fond of the committee and royal commission method of dealing with these questions which should be dealt with in this house. It has been a favoured method of the federal government to postpone action on the very matters with which they were elected to deal, on which action was most imperatively required in connection with both domestic and external affairs. These committees and commissions achieve nothing; that is one reason why they are appointed. In any event they are only advisory and their reports to this house generally do not amount to anything. Here we have this commission on the constitution, which I am told cost \$400,000, and the report will just go to the archives. Canada has had enough of these Pickwickian committees and commissions, all of which are instructed by the government as to their personnel and as to the scope of their inquiry. Many of these appointments are made for reasons of expediency, while some of the commissions are overloaded with professors.

We are behind the times in Canada. If something of this sort is needed I believe the government should adopt the resolutions I brought before the house in 1937, 1938 and 1939, on parliamentary, constitutional, cabinet and law reform, which would include senate reform. Dear knows senate reform is badly needed, when we see some of the appointments which have been made there recently for political reasons.

Mr. JEAN-FRANÇOIS POULIOT (Temiscouata): Mr. Speaker, I have devoted a great deal of thought and study to the subject of parliamentary practice and have gathered a library of parliamentary rules embracing every parliament, legislative assembly and legislative

council within the empire. I think perhaps my collection is more complete than any other here in Ottawa, even in our parliament. I will gladly place my collection at the disposal of any hon. member who would like information about the parliamentary rules of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa or even the legislative bodies of Jamaica, the Bahamas or any other part of the British empire. Once in London I approached a firm of publishers and asked if they would publish a book on comparative parliamentary procedure and practice throughout the empire. I left the manuscript in the hands of a reader who, when I returned after a few days, said to me, "Sir, the only way to have this published is through a foundation, because no one will read a book on parliamentary practice and procedure."

A few years ago, as a delegate to a small conference of the British Empire Parliamentary Association, I had the opportunity of addressing a few words to a meeting of that conference at Westminster, which meeting was presided over by Sir John Simon. I went on to explain the practices in the various legislative bodies of Canada and other parts of the empire, and told my fellow delegates that the most complete rules in Canada were those of the province of Quebec which had been prepared by Mr. Geoffrion at the time Sir Lomer Gouin was premier. Then a delegate from New Zealand rose and said, "What is the use of mentioning any number of rules? They do not count at all, because in every legislative body the main rule is the will of the government."

I believe it will be agreed that the text of a rule is not so important as an understanding of the British parliamentary tradition at Westminster. It is our duty as a parliament—and I speak for the Senate as well as for the House of Commons—to follow as closely as possible the British tradition which has been established at Westminster and which has been in force there for many centuries; but what is the use of aping it? There is a great difference. In this parliament we have two books; we have the rules of the house, which is a very thin book, and we also have a compendium which has been prepared by our common friend Doctor Beauchesne, the clerk of the house. As I have said, the rules themselves form a much smaller book than the compendium, but they are the rules adopted by this house. We are the masters of our destiny. I remember quite well when a dinner was given to my chief, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), at the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec city after the election of 1926. Speaking of the position of the Prime Minister in this parliament my right hon. friend said, "I am only the first