

Mines, Forests and Waters Committee

Mr. Fraser: On one occasion it was smaller; there were only 39 Conservatives in this house.

Mr. Argue: Yes; and he indicated that these objections were not taken. I think the house leader will recall that at no previous session were so many committees struck as is the case at this time. It is not just a question of the size of the opposition parties. Of equal concern is the fact that more committees will be meeting this session than ever before. Some of these committees have not met for 20 years or more. Government members stressed this point when we were discussing the motion the other day. We are being asked in the motion before us to agree in advance, with the session just four weeks old, to have a committee meet while the house is sitting.

This discussion came before the estimates committee the other morning; and while two members of the Conservative party presented the motion it was spoken to by a number of opposition members. I observed one hopeful sign, in that new Conservative members on the committee were of the opinion that we should not ask committees of parliament to sit while the house is sitting. I believe a good precedent has been set. I would hope that this motion would be withdrawn and perhaps presented at a later time in a different form. If the government through its overwhelming majority should insist on having a number of committees meeting while the house is sitting, the government will be a party to making it impossible for opposition parties to function adequately this session.

I seriously urge the government to consider very carefully before taking any step that would make it difficult for opposition members to carry out the important tasks of opposition. I am certain the people of Canada will not look with favour on the government if they learn at some later date that hon. members must attend the meetings of several committees at the same time the house is sitting.

Because of the very clear statement made by the Prime Minister on this subject; because we believe committees should not sit while the house is sitting, and in view of the assurances given that this would not be done, we in this group are going to oppose this motion.

Mr. Speaker: Is the house ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

[Mr. Argue.]

The house divided on the motion (Mr. Murphy) which was agreed to on the following division:

YEAS

Messrs:

Aiken	Lennard
Aitken, Miss	Lockyer
Allard	Macdonald (Kings)
Allmark	Macdonnell
Anderson	Macquarrie
Balcer	MacBain
Baldwin	McCleave
Baskin	McDonald
Beech	(Hamilton South)
Bell (Carleton)	McFarlane
Bell (Saint John-Albert)	McGee
Bigg	McGrath
Bissonnette	McIntosh
Broome	McLennan
Browne (St. John's West)	McPhillips
Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway)	McQuillan
Brunsdan	Martel
Cadieu	Martineau
Campbell	Martini
(Lambton-Kent)	Milligan
Campeau	Monteith (Perth)
Cardiff	Montgomery
Charlton	Morissette
Chown	Morris
Churchill	Morton
Clancy	Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria)
Coates	Murphy
Comtois	Nesbitt
Creaghan	Nowlan
Crouse	Nugent
Danforth	O'Hurley
Dorion	Pallett
Doucett	Parizeau
Drysdale	Pascoe
Dubois	Paul
English	Payne
Fairclough, Mrs.	Pearkes
Fane	Pigeon
Fleming (Eglinton)	Pratt
Fleming (Okanagan-Revelstoke)	Pugh
Flynn	Rapp
Fraser	Rea
Graffey	Ricard
Green	Richard (Kamouraska)
Grenier	Rogers
Gundlock	Rompere
Halpenny	Rynard
Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace)	Skoreyko
Hamilton (Qu'Appelle)	Smallwood
Hamilton (York West)	Smith (Calgary South)
Hees	Smith (Hastings-Frontenac)
Henderson	Southam
Hicks	Speakman
Hodgson	Stanton
Horner (Acadia)	Stefanson
Horner (Jasper-Edson)	Stinson
Horner (The Battlefords)	Tasse
Howe	Taylor
Jung	Thomas
Kennedy	Thrasher
Kindt	Villeneuve
Knowles	Vivian
Korchinski	Walker
Lafreniere	White
Legere	Winkler
	Wooliams—129.

NAYS

Messrs:

Argue	Benidickson
Batten	Bourget