

The Address—Mr. Diefenbaker

each member a more than rudimentary knowledge of the rules of the house. The second requisite is the opportunity to work. Here we have many new members in this House of Commons and we have believed throughout the years that something should be done to provide the opportunity to those who are new in this field of endeavour to make their individual contributions. For this reason we intend to place before the house the setting up of committees so that more effective work can be done. These committees, of course, will not be policy-making committees for such a course would infringe upon the basic responsibility for policy on the part of the government.

In the past the effectiveness of committees has been nullified because on all occasions the government of those days denied to committees the power, as I said a moment ago, to send for persons and papers. We are going to welcome the co-operation of the opposition in the discharge of their responsibilities in these committees in that those things which are not right, if such things exist, will be brought to the light of day.

We intend to set up a committee on estimates and if this committee performs its duties the membership of this committee will have endless hours and days of toilsome effort.

What about the committee on public accounts? I have been here since 1940 and whenever that committee was convened it was impossible to bring up any matter excepting those matters desired by the majority. I am now asking that this committee be made effective and I doubt whether it would have been thought that action of this kind would be taken so early in this first session of parliament. I want to see that an effective committee is formed, not just a body set up for decorative purposes. We intend in so far as that committee is concerned to propose that a member of Her Majesty's loyal opposition be chairman of that committee in order to ensure its effectiveness. I would urge some reference to that by my hon. friend.

There are of course other committees. Over the years, for example, the veterans of this country have been asking for a committee on veterans' affairs. There have been some select committees throughout the sessions but we intend to meet this situation by setting up a standing committee on veterans' affairs so that veterans' legislation introduced during this session will be available for full examination. Today my hon. friend the Minister of Finance referred to governor general's warrants and there was some reference made to a change of attitude on the part of this government. In the last day of the last session

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an examination was said to have been refused in order to allow the matter to be dealt with. I was not in the house on that day until 5.45 p.m., but I read *Hansard*.

Mr. McIlraith: The house was not in existence when you came in on that occasion.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The statement of my hon. friend indicates that he has not read or, having read, has not appreciated.

We intend to set up this committee; we intend to have an examination of the expenditures made under governor general's warrants.

An hon. Member: This is new.

Mr. Diefenbaker: It is not a question of amount. There were governor general's warrants issued and passed and my reading of the record does not indicate that the stand we are going to take whereby the expenditures were made available to a committee of the house for complete examination was taken in the past.

Mr. Pickersgill: They were made available to the whole house.

Mr. Diefenbaker: There is a tremendous amount of work to be done in the committee on estimates. Mention has been made of defence and expenditures in that connection. The committee on estimates when set up will have an opportunity to examine the expenditures placed before it and will be in a position to determine by such examination, in a most meticulous manner, the basis for such expenditures and the general nature thereof.

If my hon. friends wish to find information on the committee system and the way in which it operates within the British parliamentary system, which after all is the basis on which we work, I ask them to read the latest volume of *Beauchesne* at pages 210 and 211 wherein are set forth in detail the committees which are set up in the House of Commons, the effectiveness of the system in the United Kingdom and also the nature of the United Kingdom procedure in this regard. In the United Kingdom, the motion is that a select committee be appointed to examine such of the estimates presented to this house as may seem fit to the committee, and to suggest the form, and so on, after which the number of members and other details are given; committees to report from time to time, to have power to have evidence taken by their sub-committees and so forth.

The public accounts committee, as mentioned on page 212, is designed in the United Kingdom to guarantee financial regularity and exercises great influence over the departments, though it possesses no direct power