

In Quebec, I also have a membership list of all the standing committees and their quorums. The standing committees are generally relatively smaller in numbers than in Ontario and the quorums are also smaller in numbers. As regards special committees, I submit the following information from the Quebec assembly rules of 1915:

A majority of the members of a special committee shall compose a quorum unless otherwise ordered by the House.

Rule No. 332 states:

No special committee may consist of more than fifteen members without special leave of the House.

I shall refer later to the situation in Great Britain in this respect.

In Nova Scotia, with a total membership in the legislative assembly of forty-three, the committees are also fairly large, relatively, I think, as large as they are in Ontario or Quebec. The report which I have does not seem to indicate any disposition either to increase or decrease, and there is no complaint as to irregularity or poor attendance.

I have also the list of the various committees, with membership, quorum and so on, in New Brunswick. I wish now only to draw to the attention of the House the opinion of the clerk of the legislative assembly of New Brunswick that the percentage of attendance in the smaller committees is better than in the larger committees.

I have not as yet received any direct reply in regard to Prince Edward Island although I have the information.

There is nothing of special interest to refer to as regards Manitoba.

In Saskatchewan, a majority constitutes a quorum unless otherwise ordered. I may say, however, that the quorums as ordered by the assembly are relatively small, running from eight down to three.

The situation in Alberta is somewhat the same. In both Saskatchewan and Alberta the membership of the committees is large. I think the situation is very much the same as it is in Ontario where the committee meetings do not clash and are held infrequently.

The information from British Columbia is also to the same effect, that there seems to be no particular disposition to move one way or the other. Generally speaking, the provinces of Canada have standing committees, the meetings of which do not, I think, clash, and no special difficulty seems to have been experienced.

I attempted to get some information concerning the situation in Australia and South

Africa, but the information which I was able to secure is not sufficiently complete to make it worth while giving it to the House. I desire, however, to refer to the situation in the United States which, I think, is to a very large extent similar to Canada. In the United States the select standing committees of the House of Representatives are very numerous and small in number. There are fifty-five such committees, and it might be interesting to hon. members if I would refer to some of these committees and give the number of members composing them: On elections, three committees to consist of nine members each; on ways and means, 26 members; on appropriations, 35; on judiciary, 21; on banking and commerce, 21; on coinage weights and measures, 19; on interstate and foreign commerce, 21; on rivers and harbours, 21. And so on. The membership is almost entirely in the neighbourhood of 20—22, 22, 21, 21, 20, 21, 22, 22, 19, and so on, down through the list. There are a few smaller committees: for example, education, 15; labour, 14; patents, 14; invalid pensions, 16, and so forth. There are some with 13. Then there are a number of committees having to do with expenditures in the different departments; these are quite small committees. I might mention a few: expenditures in the State department, 7; Treasury department, 7; War department, 7, and so on. They range between 6 and 7. The committee on rules numbers 12, of whom the speaker must be one. A rather interesting committee, the 55th of the number, is the committee on the disposition of useless executive papers, 2 members. I have a letter from the clerk of the House of Representatives and I should like to quote a few sentences from it:

A majority of the entire membership, excluding vacancies, constitutes a quorum. In the House, in committee of the whole, 100 constitutes a quorum.

On the whole, committee attendance is regular. It is only when meeting days of committees clash that difficulty is had in securing a quorum.

The size of house committees is determined by the relative numerical strength of the two great political parties. The membership on committees is in ratio to that of the membership of the House itself.

I would quote now the last paragraph in this letter in regard to the percentage of attendance of smaller or larger committees. The answer is as follows:

This question cannot be answered with any degree of accuracy. I will say, however, that practically all of the large committees operate through sub-committees of 3 or 5 members each, indicating that better results can be obtained by small committees.