

of 40 members only eleven were Liberals. No hon. gentleman will contend that that was a fair proportion of the complexion of the House. On Private Bills, our proportion was larger—10 to 15. On the committee on Internal Economy and Contingent Accounts, composed of 25, there were only six Liberals. That certainly was not a fair proportion, such as they were entitled to. I should hope, therefore, that the Senate will give the subject their fair consideration, and recognize the principles that I have laid down, that the government of the day ought to be more largely represented on the committees in the future than they have been in the past.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I have listened with no little interest and surprise to the explanations and the reason given by the Secretary of State for the course which he has adopted. It will be in the recollection of hon. gentlemen who were present at the striking of the committees last year, that when certain objections were taken to the complexion of the different committees upon the grounds of the political opinions of certain members, the hon. Secretary of State rose in his place, and with a good deal of warmth declared that no question of politics since he had been in the Senate had been introduced by the striking committee in nominating the standing committees. To-day, he has left the impression upon the minds of those who listened to him that that was the ruling passion in striking of committees. I have been on the Striking Committee since I have had the honour of a seat in the Senate—since 1893—and I never heard the question mooted of the political leanings of the gentlemen who composed the striking committee until last year. If in the formation of the standing committees the proportions of the two parties were of the character to which the hon. gentlemen refers, why did he neglect his duty—why did he not complain that justice was not done to his friends? I state positively that the hon. gentleman took no such objections to what was done by that committee in the formation of the standing committees. On the contrary, when objections were taken in this House to the formation of the committees, he defended

the report of the committee and did it warmly too, and at that time I complimented him on doing so. The question of the political opinions of gentlemen of the committee had never been questioned or mooted, and wherever the Secretary of State or the then Minister of Justice, made any suggestions as to filling up vacancies, they were accepted at once, as I take it for granted they would be now. That is really the practice that has prevailed in the past and it is to be regretted that the hon. gentleman has departed from that principle. It is true that in the House of Commons, which is an exclusively political body, the chairman of the striking committee, as a rule is the representative of the dominant party. The representatives of the government and opposition meet together and decide upon what is the relative strength of each party in the House of Commons, and after having ascertained that, they say, 'your proportion of such a committee is so many, you are entitled to so many representatives,' and on that principle they act. That is the practice on which the House of Commons committees are formed, and reported to the House. Last year, when I moved a special committee of very great importance, I showed it to the then Minister of Justice, and upon that basis, he not only stated to the House, but to myself privately that the proportions were equitable and quite proper. I should like to ask the hon. gentleman and the members of this House, what could be done other than was done when the House was composed of a majority of forty or fifty on one side of politics? Was that disproportion to be ignored altogether, and were the Liberal members, largely in the minority, to be put on every committee? I hesitate not to say, and I will be supported by every one who has had anything to do with the formation of these committees, that the members supporting the government have been given most prominent positions on all those committees, some of them having been on four and five committees at the same time as the result of their being numerically weak. If that is to be the basis of the formation of the committee, the Secretary of State has no right to claim a majority on any of those committees. The Senate stands to-day, if

Hon. Mr. SCOTT.