

*Motion for Concurrence in Report*

members from all sides, which makes a recommendation which may prove to be embarrassing and which may be critical. If the House and Your Honour should accept the argument of the government House leader, then any criticism can be stultified at the whim of the cabinet.

The report does not belong to the cabinet or to the committee. It belongs to this House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** True enough, it is customary or at least it is a matter of courtesy that the chairman shall present the report and then ask for concurrence in it. But in his absence, it may be presented by the vice-chairman or by any other committee member on behalf of the chairman. It is not the chairman's motion—not at all. It is the motion of the member who proposes the adoption of the report. In this case, I would say everything has been done properly. I would say also that the strictures advanced by the government House leader are a reflection on the Chair and the officers who decided that the motion should be put where it now stands on the Order Paper.

• (3:00 p.m.)

Since it has been placed there, the hon. member for Athabasca has a perfect right to put his motion for the consideration of the House. I ask hon. members to accept this view, and trust I have persuaded Your Honour that it is the right course.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Paul St. Pierre (Coast Chilcotin):** I assure Your Honour that I shall heed your warning to speak directly to the subject and that I shall try to be extremely brief.

I make no apology for entering this debate. I raised this question in the House when the so-called watchdogs in the opposition had not uttered a single yelp. They are interested in this subject very late. I am one of those who feel that the government of Canada has been dilatory in this matter; I believe it should have moved long before now. I am also one of the committee members involved in this report. To speak directly to the question at issue, I believe there is a difference between a recommendation from a committee as to a policy line, and detailed, close recommendations involving the expenditure of public money, acceptance of which by the government would not be merely the acceptance of a principle.

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

The hon. member for Peace River gave the impression—I do not suggest he was trying to mislead the House—that by accepting these recommendations the government would merely be accepting a certain principle voiced by myself and by a large number of other members of this House that Arctic sovereignty must be proclaimed and proclaimed soon. But a reading of the report does not bear this out. There is one paragraph on Arctic sovereignty, an extremely important one with which I fully agree, but there are others which involve the expenditure of money. On page 210 of *Votes and Proceedings* dated December 16, 1969, we read, for instance:

Your committee recommends that appropriate agencies of the government move immediately to conduct a search in the Arctic to gather information on the following—

Then a number of subjects for research are listed.

A little later we read a recommendation that further research studies be undertaken into the effects of pollution and so on. These are recommendations intended to influence the government, and I certainly hope they do, but I believe there is a fundamental difference between the expression of a point of view by a committee with the intention of putting pressure on a government, and the setting out of detailed policy which amounts, in effect, to a committee taking on the job of the cabinet by spelling out policy in detail—policy which the government would then be obliged to follow to the smallest particular.

**Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East):** I hope I may have your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, while I draw to your attention a matter which cannot be allowed to pass without comment, and one which is disturbing me immensely. I refer to the fact that during the discussion this afternoon, for the first time to my knowledge in the 17 years in which I have had the privilege of being a member of this House, an hon. member—a member on the government side, it so happens—has seen fit while talking about a matter before the House, to disclose the discussions, consideration and decision of a steering committee of a committee of this House. This is a matter of the utmost importance.

A steering committee is appointed by a committee, and it reports only to the standing committee which appointed it. The disclosure to this House of the discussion, consideration and decision of a steering committee establishes such an extraordinary precedent that I feel obliged to draw it to Your Honour's