

Transport and Communications

that it violates citation 318 (3) of Beauséne...

A member will not be permitted in presenting a report to make any remarks on the subject matter; he can only properly do so on a motion in reference to the report.

I suggest that if this limitation is placed on the member of the house who has the moving of the motion in his care, it applies to everyone else. The minister should have waited until the motion had been made, at which point he could speak and argue against the report to his heart's content.

Mr. Bell: And vote against it if he likes.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): There are other citations which state what can be done with a report from a committee. Citation 323 (2) states:

A report from a committee cannot be amended by the house but it must be referred back to the committee.

Paragraph (3) states:

On the consideration of a report, motions have been made expressing the agreement or the disagreement of the house therewith, or motions are made which are founded upon, or which enforce the resolutions of the committee.

My point is that it is perfectly in order for the President of the Privy Council to take objection to the contents of the report, and it is even open to him to argue, when it is before us, that it is an improper report—that it violates the constitution, or what have you. To have done it in this way however, and bring in a debate before the motion is before us, I submit, highly irregular.

• (2:20 p.m.)

In my view, whatever views the President of the Privy Council has, Your Honour should give the hon. member for LaSalle the opportunity to move concurrence in this report, his motion being already on the order paper. Having been instructed to do so by the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications, I submit he has the right to move the motion, and that other members of that committee as well as members of this house have the right to speak on it pro or con, including the President of the Privy Council. I think he should have waited till the proper time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, my comments will be quite short and similar to those of the previous speakers.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

This situation seems to repeat itself. In fact, this is the second time that objections are made to a committee report being concurred in and if the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) does not accept the report in which concurrence has been moved today, it will become customary from now on to reject certain committee reports as a result of a minister's objection.

The minister can perhaps object to it, but the authority of the house is such that it can refuse to concur in a report and defer it again to the said committee instructing it to consider it more thoroughly.

If we refuse to consider this report today, we will set a precedent and we can ask ourselves which reports will be concurred in, since ministers may object to some of them. I feel that no hon. member can accept or reject the report of a committee which has been empowered to present a formal report to the house.

[*English*]

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, as leader of the government in this house the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) should exhibit a superior knowledge of the rules. This afternoon he has fallen into a lamentable lapse. I would point out to him that this house is not his servant in any way at any time, notwithstanding the fact that this is perhaps the first time that a leader of the house has been given a cabinet position that entitles him to devote his attentions exclusively to the leadership of the house.

This house has passed certain rules as a result of which certain authorities or competences have, with a great fanfare of trumpets, been passed on to committees; but every time a committee dares show one iota of independence, like an overnight mushroom the President of the Privy Council is bound to pop up.

Like my colleague on this side of the house, the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), and also the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), I say that the President of the Privy Council has lamentably jumped the gun. In arguing the substance of the matter before Your Honour he could not recognize the difference between a point of order and a point of substance. I put it to you that, as in the case of other motions that have appeared before Your Honour, the President of the Privy Council has been most precipitate in rising to his feet to argue, not a point of order to the effect that the report was improperly on the order paper, but a