

Privileges and Elections

honourable members who attacked him will withdraw their remarks.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very simple question that was discussed in committee, and I suggest that the motion for concurrence of the report of the committee should be agreed to by the house.

[English]

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that members on the government side of the house would be considerate enough to give members of every party in the house an opportunity to speak. It has been very apparent that they want to take up the time of the house to tell their version of what happened. It is only fair that the opposition should have equal time.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacGuigan: There will be another day.

Mr. Skoberg: It is apparent from the noise on the opposite side of the house that some hon. members are not aware of the facts. It appears that the hon. member for Manicouagan (Mr. Blouin), the former chairman of the committee on transport and communications, took an unfair advantage. I was particularly surprised at his attitude to this issue. The hon. member referred to a statement made by one of my colleagues, the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), who had pointed out that if there was nothing wrong in what had been done the government members of the committee on privileges and elections would be able to show that that was so and the matter could be cleared up. If there is nothing to hide, why would any member be concerned whether or not the motion was passed at the time?

I am very surprised that the hon. member has taken issue with statements that appear in *Hansard* for that particular day. In all fairness I think we should look a little further at the transcript of evidence that is before us. The chairman of the committee was not present when a statement was made about the intent of the motion that had been moved by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath). As reported on page 107 of the committee report the hon. member for St. John's East said:

My motion is that the decision of the C.T.C. allowing C.N. to abandon rail passenger service in Newfoundland—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. It being two o'clock, pursuant to special order

[Mr. Forest.]

made earlier this day the proceedings now before the house must be interrupted. The house will now resume the business which was interrupted at one p.m.

DOMINION-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

HOUSE DEBATE PROVIDED THROUGH PRE-ARRANGED MOTION TO ADJOURN

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Trudeau that this house do now adjourn.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): The hon. member for York South.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege, in view of the fact that many members may think that the bells will ring at two o'clock as usual following lunch hour, and in view of the fact that the Prime Minister is not here and also other hon. members, I wonder whether we could have the bells rung for a few minutes to remind hon. members that the house is in session?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): I think hon. members are agreed to this.

And the house bells having been duly rung:

• (2:00 p.m.)

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the Prime Minister has not been able to return to the chamber yet.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): He said he would be here.

Mr. Lewis: I was going to say this morning, and I unhesitatingly say this afternoon, that it is a pleasure to congratulate the Prime Minister on the way in which he handled the constitutional conference, as its chairman. I extend these congratulations without reservation despite his inappropriately partisan performance this morning. If the Prime Minister wanted to show his backbenchers he is capable of political partisanship he should have left that for another occasion and another subject. He could not have chosen a more inappropriate subject on which to show his excellence in that field of endeavour. In view of the comment he made to me I say to him—and he promised to read my comments if he was not here to listen to them—that I received a lecture from him about the constitution and a lesson in demagoguery which many of us will not be able to excel.