

*Transport and Communications*

party presume to reflect upon the knowledge of parliamentary procedure possessed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), I thought presumption had reached the apogee of distastefulness. If the hon. house leader is here for 40 years, which is highly unlikely, he will never muster a one-thousandth part of the knowledge of house procedure possessed by the venerable member for Winnipeg North Centre.

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

**Mr. Macquarrie:** I began taking an interest in the activities of the House of Commons in the days of C. D. Howe. I was not a member then; I was in the gallery. Tonight and today I thought that the hon. house leader had a good deal in common with the hon. C. D. Howe. But there is one difference; he has the manner of that great man but not the matter. Without the matter he will not be nearly as successful.

**Mr. Allmand:** May I ask a question of the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie): Was the hon. member suggesting that the House of Commons should accept a committee report without any weighing of the evidence? Does he suggest—

**Mr. McGrath:** How many speeches do you want to make?

**Mr. Allmand:** —that the House of Commons should automatically accept any report set down by a committee, or should the House of Commons, as the sovereign body of the Canadian people, have the right to discriminate, accept and reject reports as it deems fit?

**Mr. McGrath:** The hon. member has foot and mouth disease.

**Mr. Macquarrie:** I would be pleased to deal with that question. There has been a great deal of talk about the Newfoundland "Bullet". I will say this. The house, I am confident, would have been delighted to deal with the report had the discussion been led off by the chairman of the committee. However, when the report is torpedoed in the initial stages by executive diktat, I say that is not the way to deal with it.

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. member for Hillsborough would permit another question. Would he indicate whether or not he feels inasmuch as the government house leader has raised the question of one aspect of the report

being *sub judice*, that a good deal of the work of the committees would be in that category following the reasoning of the hon. house leader?

**Mr. Macquarrie:** I think there is a good deal of logic and knowledge in that observation, as in all the observations of my colleague.

**Mr. Walter C. Carter (St. John's West):** Mr. Speaker, on November 28 last year my colleague the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) presented a motion to the Standing Committee on Transport to the effect that the decision to abandon rail passenger service in Newfoundland not be implemented until the committee on transport was given a chance to visit Newfoundland. The motion was passed by a majority of the members of the committee at that meeting. Of course, under normal circumstances this motion would have formed a part of the report of the committee to the house. It is obvious, however, that the motion was a great embarrassment to the government, so it was arbitrarily omitted from the report of that committee to the house. Next the matter was considered by the Committee on Privileges and Elections where it was clearly shown that the omission of the motion from the committee report had been improper, and without any legal or procedural justification.

Finally, we had the report written with the heavy hand of government direction to the effect that the original motion was not properly before the committee. In the meantime, the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications visited the Atlantic provinces, including the province of Newfoundland. On the basis of the evidence heard during its visit, it recommended that the order of the Canadian Transport Commission authorizing the Canadian National Railways to suspend rail passenger service in Newfoundland on April 15 be left in abeyance until the committee tabled its complete report in respect of this matter.

Again, it is obvious that this recommendation was an embarrassment to the government and especially to the government house leader. An attempt was made by the house leader and by the government to kill this report. The unfortunate part of this whole thing is that we have one agency of government which has set about deliberately, in collaboration with two other agencies, the Canadian Transport Commission and the Canadian National Railways, to kill Newfoundland's rail passenger service.