

Transport and Communications

President of the Privy Council is unduly sensitive in this regard.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I just have a regard for the truth.

Mr. Nesbitt: Let the hon. gentleman keep still for a moment. I realize he is having difficulty in containing himself but I would remind him that when he is dealing with members of the opposition he is not dealing with members of his own caucus whom he can shut up at will.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nesbitt: If the President of the Privy Council would pay a little less attention to some of his friends, with whom he seems to be carrying on a conversation, and more attention to what is being said I think he would find I referred to the first instance of difficulty in the Transport Committee as arising from a suspicion of interference. Certainly that suspicion existed. Among other things, it led to the matter being referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. At one time—and this is on record in *Hansard*—the President of the Privy Council made reference to the committee in this house, saying there was information that certain things had taken place. This, not unreasonably, caused concern among opposition members and the incident was the subject of an inquiry before the Committee on Privileges and Elections. When the committee's report is presented and probably debated, more of these circumstances will perhaps be brought to light and placed in better perspective. This point may be open to question if the President of the Privy Council feels so sensitive about it. That is his view, of course.

But in the second instance there is no doubt there has been interference or attempted interference with this committee by the hon. gentleman. First, as Your Honour is well aware, the President of the Privy Council attempted to do so by means of a point of order which proved to be not a very substantial one. Now he has attempted to do indirectly, by moving an amendment to the motion to adopt the committee's report, what he could not do directly. It seems a great pity to me that he should seek to do so in view of the work which has been done by the Transport Committee in particular as well as by other committees.

• (3:50 p.m.)

The Transport Committee made a rather unprecedented trip in order to gain information for the government and the house. It took a trip recently on instructions from the house to look into transportation problems in the Atlantic provinces. I understand that the Committee on agriculture, the Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development and other committees are taking similar trips. I think this is very good, Mr. Speaker. These trips involve a great deal of time on the part of members of these committees who are away from their duties and the house. Exclusive concentration of effort is required in this regard. They involve considerable expense to the house.

I think this work and expense are justified, Mr. Speaker. These committees are being given additional work and responsibility. Committees I have been associated with have done their work well, objectively and with a minimum of partisanship. It is a pity that when reports are brought in they are obviously interfered with by the government. In this particular case there was interference by the blunt instrument of the government, the President of the Privy Council. There were suspicions in the Transport Committee that the President of the Privy Council was acting on behalf of others, perhaps members of the Canadian Transport Commission who are former members of this house.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Nesbitt: It is a shame, I agree.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that the rules of relevancy restrict the debate at this point to the content of the report. While I appreciate that the hon. member has had a much longer experience in the house than I have, I think it is in the best interests of the procedures of the house that we follow the rules of relevancy and restrict our remarks as much as possible to the content of the report.

Mr. Nesbitt: I quite agree with Your Honour. I think the remarks I made concerning the subject of committees and committee reports have been highly relevant. I will not continue with further remarks along this line if you feel they are out of order. I will continue in a different vein.

It seems a pity that recommendations carefully drawn up by members of the Transport Committee are disregarded. It is a waste of time for committees to work hard and travel