

Privilege

has been hanky-panky so far as this committee is concerned. I cannot speak for other committees. The only way we can find out who the culprits are in relation to this committee is to place them before another committee. The only regret I have is that this other committee will be chaired by a Liberal, and will have a Liberal majority.

● (2:50 p.m.)

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to give this point of privilege serious consideration, because it does go to the very root of democracy. The present situation constitutes a dictatorial act that is dangerous to democracy and will destroy democracy. Those are the three "d's" that we want to investigate as far as this question of privilege is concerned. I support and incorporate in my argument everything the distinguished member has said, and I hope, sir, you will give this matter your most serious consideration; because this institution will fall to pieces if this is the way our committee structure is going to be run, particularly when the government hopes to turn over the responsibility for \$11 billion to this kind of kangaroo court.

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I rise briefly to support the motion moved by the hon. member for St. John's East. I should like to point out to Your Honour one or two matters that have not been dealt with already, and which I think are very pertinent to the point at issue.

First of all, a report presented by the standing committee on transport and communications was tabled in this house and the usual procedure was not followed, in that concurrence of that report was not asked for. Instead this report of the committee, or the alleged report, still lies on the table of the house, and this in itself is a very strange state of affairs from which I think any reasonable persons could draw their own conclusions.

Second, I have been a member of the standing committee on transport and communications since this session of parliament started, and to the best of my knowledge attended all its meetings during the period that the matter contained in the report has been dealt with. It is quite possible that I might have missed a committee meeting because so many committee meetings were called without notice and unexpectedly, without any warning being given the members of the committee, but I repeat that to the best of

[Mr. Woolliams.]

my knowledge and belief I have not missed any meetings.

At no time to my knowledge was this alleged report that has been tabled in the house ever presented to the committee for approval or discussion, or as far as I know to the steering committee either. This seems a very strange state of affairs. I should like to know exactly how this report was drawn up, who drew it up, and what authority there was for tabling it in this house. I have been a member of committees of this house for nearly 15 years but have never before seen a situation where committee reports, which are normally drafted by the chairman and the steering committee, were not presented to the committee for approval before being tabled in the house.

In my opinion there is a prima facie case here for referring this particular report, which still lies on the table of this house, to the standing committee on privileges and elections in order to ascertain exactly how the report was put before the house, who drafted it, and what if any omissions were made in the report.

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, in urging that Your Honour grant this motion for referral to the committee on privileges and elections, I must first of all state that although I have not been in this institution of confusion too many months I am finding so many things that in my opinion are against the grain of democracy that it makes me wonder in which direction we are going in this regard.

The point I would certainly like to have cleared up and which I think can be cleared up if the matter is referred to the committee on privileges and elections is what purpose a committee really performs, and what its function is in this institution.

I bring this up, Mr. Speaker, because it has always been my opinion that matters referred to a committee and referred back to this house, or any action taken by the committee, should be dealt with. I respectfully suggest that the resolution in question before the transport committee was adopted by a majority vote. I thought at that time, and I was then serving as a temporary replacement for the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Schreyer) on the steering committee, that we would be consulted with regard to the report to be brought into the house. We were not consulted. That report did not include everything that had been passed by the transport committee. I was disturbed to find that the report