Speaker, what constitutes a key member of a committee. In my opinion all members are equal.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order, please. I ask the hon. member who has the floor to restrict his remarks to the amendment before the house.

**Mr. Perrault:** I intend to restrict my remarks to the facts, and that may be a notable contribution to the debate today. But the suggestion that somehow democracy has been subverted because the committee did not bring in a report which is to the liking of some members of the opposition is pure, unadulterated hogwash, and the agony of these opposition members hopping up and objecting on small and insignificant technical points does not strengthen their case at all.

I am simply saying that of the group which toured the maritimes and saw the conditions firsthand—and I was a member of that group—I would not have voted in favour of this particular report.

**Mr. McGrath:** Why were you not at the meeting?

**Mr. Perrault:** At least ten members were absent, all of them important.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order, please. I ask for the co-operation of members of the house. The hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour now has the floor.

**Mr. Perrault:** The way some members descend to vilification indicates the quality of the argument which they have advanced today.

• (9:10 p.m.)

The members of the committee which toured the maritimes showed a dedicated interest in the problems of the maritimes, and that goes for all members of all parties. We have a good group, there. I am suggesting that the committee report of March 17 was not representative of the group of people who investigated those conditions.

**Mr. Baldwin:** I rise on a point of order. No hon. member is entitled to challenge the validity of a properly made recommendation and report which has been brought into the house by a committee merely because all the committee members were not present at the time it was made. We are now debating the report of the committee, together with an amendment and a subamendment which have been made in this connection. No hon. member is entitled to go behind the report and say it was not a good report because it was not drawn up when all the committee members were present. If this argument were to be accepted there is scarcely a committee report brought into the house which would not be subject to criticism on these grounds and the suggestion that it should, therefore, not be approved. I do not think the hon. member can put forward that line of argument.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order. I will again ask the hon. member to restrict his remarks to the amendment and not to discuss the committee meetings.

**Mr. Perrault:** With all due respect to the learned member of Her Majesty's Official Opposition, I do not think this house needs a lecture on procedure.

**Some hon. Members:** You do.

**Mr. Perrault:** I have had something to do with legislative proceedings and I am suggesting that it comes to a situation in which a committee reports back to this house, and the Official Opposition itself freely acknowledges that since there is a government majority the government's majority is acceptable to them, despite any minority objections they may hold. In this case the government states there is a technical and perhaps a philosophical flaw in the report as received. It is entirely in order for the house to refer a section of this report back to the committee.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame.

**Mr. Perrault:** There is nothing in the amendment before us to justify the kind of action contemplated in the subamendment moved by the representative of the New Democratic party. This paragraph could be deleted. Another paragraph could be brought back on the same subject in another form. The government, which commands a majority in this house, simply says it is not in order to accept the report in this particular form. If members of the opposition wish to challenge this, they have a right to do so in the course of subsequent committee meetings and a democratic vote will be taken. It should be repeated that members on the government side of the house and in this rump in the corner, happen to hold a majority in this parliament and they are not going to be run by a minority group in this house. Members who are so agitated about the procedure contemplated here should seek to have themselves