

Privileges and Elections

would realize the importance of the rail passenger service to Newfoundlanders. How can you move a sick person from east to west on a C.N. bus without the proper facilities over a distance of 600 miles and sometimes taking as much as 20 hours? These are the real problems that our people are worried about.

We do not want to keep our trains, however colourful they may be, for sentimental reasons. We want to hang on to our trains until such time as the system of transportation in Newfoundland is improved to the point where we can do without them. We have not arrived at that point today. All we have in Newfoundland to replace our rail service is an inadequate trans-Canada highway which was hastily built to fulfil a political promise in 1965 and today is below the standards of the trans-Canada highway in other parts of Canada. As a consequence it constitutes one of the most dangerous highways in the whole Dominion of Canada. Yet the trains have been removed and Newfoundlanders are to become totally dependent on a bus service. What would the hon. member for Esquimaux-Saanich do if a decision were made to abolish the railways in his province?

• (1:40 p.m.)

Mr. Anderson: A direct question has been asked. Would the hon. member allow me to reply to it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East has the floor.

Mr. McGrath: What would other hon. members do in such circumstances? What would the hon. member for Burin-Burgeo do if the C.N.R. were to decide to do away with the coastal service in his constituency?

Mr. Cafik: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I should like to know as a matter of information whether there is any limit to the amount of such talk that we have to endure and, second, whether the hon. member is really speaking to the motion before the house. We are not debating the problems of Newfoundland and its railway system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There are still a few minutes left to the hon. member for St. John's East.

Mr. McGrath: It would appear to me that hon. members opposite have now lost whatever regard they had for Newfoundland. That is understandable, bearing in mind what happened on June 25. I can understand why the hon. member does not want to hear this. But

I can tell him that it is of great concern to his friend the Minister of Defence Production. It should be of great concern to everyone because the buses are not working. Having seen the buses in operation over the past two months we feel more strongly than ever that this decision should not be implemented. Parliament should live up to its responsibilities to the people of Newfoundland and see to it that our people continue to enjoy their rail transportation system as long as the total system of public transportation in Newfoundland remains inadequate as it is today.

Ontario has a bus system and a railway system. Quebec has the same. Every other province can have a bus system and a railway system. Why set this precedent in Newfoundland? Does the president of the Canadian Transport Commission want to do away with the railways in British Columbia? He is obviously a very powerful man. Does he want to do away with the railway system on Prince Edward Island? It was with such fears in mind that we felt obliged to conduct a debate on this question, to carry out an investigation in the transport committee and to move the resolution which was moved on November 28. We felt strongly about it then and we feel even more strongly about it now in the light of our experience of the operation of Canadian National buses in Newfoundland in the past two months.

In view of the importance of the subject matter, in view of the outcome of the debate which took place in the committee, and in the light of the background I have tried to outline, I find I cannot support the third report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. I cannot support the conclusions reached in the report. If I were to do so I would be supporting the thesis that from now on every time a resolution is adopted by a committee there has to be a further resolution calling for the original resolution to be presented to the house. To me, this does not make sense. When a committee adopts a resolution it is obviously instructing the officers of the committee to incorporate it in the committee report and to place it before the house without any further specific instruction. This, it seems to me, would be the logical course to follow. I do not know why the government should be worrying about it now. We have begun to operate under the new rules and this being the case the government will never again be defeated in committee. From now on they are in a position to slip new members on