

*Seal Hunt Consideration by Committee*

What might be helpful as far as the Chair is concerned are views as to whether there is an actual abuse of the privileges of hon. members, in commenting on parliamentary committees. If hon. members have views to express at this time they will be taken into account when I consider the matter further.

**Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore):** I should like to accept your invitation to comment briefly, Mr. Speaker, by pointing out that the Committee on Fisheries and Forestry worked very diligently on this problem, after it had been referred to us for consideration. We examined all the facts as presented to the committee. We became aware that portions of the testimony given by some of the witnesses were in direct contradiction to facts which had been presented to us both by way of films and in other testimony.

After examining all the evidence it was the unanimous decision of the committee that the type of report which was eventually filed should be presented. Consequently we feel that the attitude taken and the expressions used in this particular newspaper article are not in accordance with the facts, and that the matter should therefore be referred to the committee for further examination.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, may I say on behalf of my hon. friends as well as for myself that we were quite prepared to leave this matter for you to decide. I think I am correct in assuming that Your Honour will check the record of the committee before reaching your decision.

As I say, we were prepared to leave it completely in your hands. However, in view of the fact that comments have been made from the floor in support of the motion we should like to register at least a question as to whether a matter of privilege is correctly before us merely because the press or outsiders comment on what goes on in parliament or in its committees. If we start referring to the Committee on Privileges and Elections every comment about the proceedings of parliament that we think is unfair, that committee will have a very busy time.

I have not studied closely the proceedings of this particular committee, but because of some correspondence I have received I have taken a cursory look at the record and it strikes me that witnesses and hon. members sparred off against each other quite well. I do not know whether one side or the other won, or whether it was a draw. I shall not try to settle that point at this time, but I think it would be a questionable practice for us to

[Mr. Speaker.]

regard the expression of free speech to which the hon. member has referred as something which should be called into question before a committee of this house.

[Translation]

**Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, if every journalist who writes something against any parliamentary body or any member of this house had to appear before the committee on privileges and elections, the committee would be kept busy all the time.

But we all want the freedom of the press to be protected, and therefore I endorse the statement just made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). We leave the decision entirely up to you in regard to this matter, and we do not think that such a matter or any similar question should be raised in this house, as we know very well that all journalists do not carry us in their heart and that quite often they use rather harsh words when writing about us.

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank hon. members for their comments. As I indicated a moment ago it will be my duty to look into the matter more deeply this afternoon, and a decision will be given later in the course of the day.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

### TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Tenth and Eleventh reports of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications—Mr. Lessard (Labelle).

[Editor's Note: Text of foregoing reports appears in today's Votes and Proceedings.]

[English]

### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

#### NEW BRUNSWICK—P.E.I. CAUSEWAY STUDY

Question No. 1,735—**Mr. Latulippe:**

Did the findings of the studies made on the proposed construction of a causeway between New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island establish (a) that the project is physically feasible, strictly from a scientific and engineering point of view (b) that it would be of benefit to the population groups involved from the point of view of commerce and communications (c) that its cost cannot be calculated, even approximately, because of