

Privilege

My question of privilege is based on the fact that the resolution adopted by the committee on November 28 was, in my view, deliberately omitted from its report to the house on November 29; that it constitutes an important part of the committee's recommendation to visit the Atlantic provinces, and thereby infringes upon the rights and privileges of myself and the other members of that committee who by majority vote moved its adoption.

I therefore move:

That the second report of the standing committee on transport and communications be referred to the standing committee on privileges and elections to determine the reason for the omission of the resolution adopted by the committee on November 28 from the second report of the committee presented to the house on November 29, and which reads as follows:

"Resolved: That the Canadian Transport Commission be requested to postpone the implementation of its decision to abandon railway service in Newfoundland until such a time as the committee travel to Newfoundland to study the transportation problems of the Atlantic provinces."

Mr. Speaker: As hon. members know, the Chair has to decide in circumstances such as these whether there is a *prima facie* case of privilege. I would appreciate hearing from hon. members on that point to facilitate the Chair in the making of a ruling in due course.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to endorse the remarks made by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) and to commend the very able and succinct manner in which he presented his question of privilege. Unlike some questions of privilege, this one had attached to it a motion relating to the fact that a resolution adopted by the standing committee on transport and communications with reference to Newfoundland railway service was not included in the report of the standing committee. The hon. member has moved, therefore, that the report of the standing committee on transport and communications be referred to the committee on privileges and elections.

Now, I think the first question to ask and answer, in accordance with your direction, Mr. Speaker, is why the hon. member for St. John's East wants to have these facts examined in the committee on privileges and elections. He wants to ascertain why this motion which was passed in one committee, namely the committee on transport and communications, should have been omitted from the report. There seems to be some suggestion,

and I say this without any reservation whatever, that there was a little hanky-panky. We cannot come to a definite conclusion on this, however, without evidence. The only way we can determine whether or not there has been hanky-panky so far as this committee is concerned, the chairman of which was a government member and which was controlled by a government majority, is to get the people we believe to be directly concerned with the matter before a committee and examine them under oath about this omission from the committee report.

As Your Honour knows, so I do not need to repeat this, once a matter has been dealt with in one session, or dealt with in a committee, that ends the matter. You will recall our argument in relation to the Crowsnest Pass freight rates. When the section of the bill dealing with those rates was defeated in committee of the whole, the then minister of transport moved another amendment relating to what was called statutory rates. At that time we took the position that they were trying to take a second kick at the cat. We say that the facts of that case are on all fours with the facts of this case. If one committee, Your Honour, has the right to rescind a motion which was carried in that standing committee, then every standing committee of the House of Commons is a farce.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Woolliams: The question of privilege, sir, relates to the fact that we want to find out why the Liberals tried to pack a meeting to rescind this motion. Indeed, they would have done so if every Tory had not been present, together with the members of other parties, to make sure they could not get away with that hanky-panky they were trying to perform.

Now is a good time, perhaps, to mention the fact that this government is trying to transfer to the standing committees consideration of expenditures involving \$11 billion, and to have them approved. Now, is this not a true question of privilege? If such committees get that authority and can be controlled by a Liberal chairman and a Liberal majority, and if when the Liberals have been absent they can then meet in a quiet little room to rescind a motion, what will happen to the expenditures and taxation problems of this nation? We cannot involve people in certain places who have given us certain information but I can say to you, as I stand in my place as a member of parliament, we believe there