

Transport and Communications

Mr. Skoberg: I would question the hon. member's reference to my being incorrect in my observation regarding the trip. The evidence will prove—and we have the transcripts of the evidence—that people were under the impression in many cases that they were making an appeal to our committee.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is a matter for debate, not a point of order.

Mr. Allmand: It is true that when some people came to the committee they perhaps thought they were doing enough to initiate an appeal, but it was pointed out to them very quickly that it was not enough. It is also significant that many of the witnesses who came to the committee and suggested that the railway passenger service be continued were representatives of unions affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress who have a whole raft of lawyers and advisers. If they thought that presenting a brief to the Transport Committee was equivalent to appealing under the Railway Act, then they certainly have bad advisers in their unions. It is obvious that they looked at the law, felt that they did not have good grounds for an appeal, and then decided to approach the Transport Committee—

Mr. Carter: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Allmand: —or they should have known that—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for St. John's West on a point of order.

Mr. Carter: I think the hon. member is as aware of the facts as I am. The leader of one union in Newfoundland did make an appeal to the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau). How high do you have to go to appeal?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. That is not a point of order.

Mr. Allmand: During the hearings in Newfoundland it was pointed out that although one union leader had sent a letter to the Prime Minister this was not sufficient to constitute an appeal under the Railway Act. I think that if he had consulted the legal and other advisers to the trade union movement he would have been told that that was the case.

On the point at issue, whether or not parliament or a committee of parliament should make recommendations to a board which is a court of record charged with making certain

decisions, it is my belief we should not make such recommendations if we have decided beforehand to set up a board for that very purpose. With respect to the statement that this report represents the consensus of the committee or is a unanimous report and that to send it back to the committee would be wrong, I submit that the report does not represent the feelings of the majority of the committee who visited Newfoundland, because the day the committee made the report, five or six of the committee members had, unfortunately, to be absent on other committee work or to attend to serious business and could not go the committee.

● (4:30 p.m.)

Mr. Skoberg: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Allmand: I and two other members of the house—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Moose Jaw on a question of privilege.

Mr. Skoberg: I ask whether a majority of the members at any committee meeting would not make a majority report if they all voted unanimously for it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. That is not a question of privilege.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member for Moose Jaw was speaking I let him make his speech; I let him say everything he wanted to say. Unfortunately, he insists on intervening at this time to raise points that are not really relevant to what I am saying.

Mr. Skoberg: Stick to the facts.

Mr. Allmand: All the members who visited Newfoundland, heard the briefs and studied the question unfortunately were not at the committee meeting and did not consent to the report the day it was adopted. The hon. member for Oxford, the hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan) and myself were away with the External Affairs Committee. I certainly would never have consented to this report, and I have been on the transport committee since 1965.

I was with the committee in Newfoundland and the maritimes, and I do not agree with the recommendations of this report. Therefore to suggest that by sending the report back to the committee we would be doing a disservice