

*Privilege*

member for Miramichi was a bloody hypocrite, I hope I understand from the Speaker that the resolution will be the Prime Minister coming into the House to withdraw those remarks. Is that what he takes to be a resolution?

**Mr. Speaker:** Sometimes Speakers make suggestions which, of course, are heard by everyone. Under certain circumstances they often are acted upon. I do not think I need to go any further.

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## PRIVILEGE

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT

**Mr. Speaker:** I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on Thursday, October 18 by the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan regarding events which transpired in connection with a planned meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport of the same day. The hon. member explained that a meeting of the transport committee had been duly convened with seven days notice pursuant to Standing Order 106(3) for the morning of October 18. He went on to state that the meeting did not take place because quorum could not be met. To put it in ordinary terms, there were not enough members there to proceed with the meeting.

The hon. member further argued that the absence of government members was perhaps a collective decision which in essence created a boycott of the committee and as such was an infringement upon the rights of other members of the committee. The hon. chief government Whip stated on the other hand that various government members of the committee had important previous commitments and it was felt that the subject matter was too important to leave in the hands of alternate or substitute members.

[*Translation*]

I have carefully considered the comments made by the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan and the Chief government Whip, and also the excellent arguments for and against which were made on that day by other members. It is difficult for the Speaker to decide on the specific issues raised by the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

[*English*]

According to the conventions and traditions of this place, the Chair ought not to intervene in the proceed-

ings of a committee unless the matter has been placed before the House by means of a report from the committee. While there obviously could be no report in these circumstances since the meeting never took place, the attendance or non-attendance of hon. members at committee meetings is clearly in the Chair's view not a matter upon which the Chair can or should take a position. However, it is a matter obviously of concern to the House and it becomes a matter of concern for the Speaker because when there are problems within the committee system, eventually and inevitably they are raised in this Chamber and before the Speaker.

As I have said on other occasions, it has to be a very severe situation indeed for the Speaker to consider intervening.

Further details of this situation have, however, been brought to the attention of the Chair by the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan in a subsequent intervention on Tuesday, October 30, 1990. At that point, the hon. member asked the Chair to rule on whether the fact that the chief government Whip had not convened a meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport for the purposes of electing a chairman constitutes an act which impedes members of the House in the performance of their duties on committees, in connection, specifically, with the review of Order in Council appointments is provided for in Standing Orders 110 and 111.

[*Translation*]

In his comments, the chief government Whip said that that House need only vote on the Striking Committee report pertaining to the membership of standing committees in order to deal with the situation of the transport committee.

[*English*]

The Chair has looked very closely at this matter. Clearly there is no chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport to convene a meeting for any purpose. Under these circumstances and pursuant to past practice, the next meeting of the committee can be convened by the Clerk of the House if the report of the Striking Committee providing for new committee memberships is adopted, or by the chief government Whip in consultation with the Whips of the other parties.