

*Motion for Concurrence in Report*

Illustrations are given dating back to the time of confederation which show that in our parliamentary history motions of this kind were put to the House. Unquestionably, the House has the right to decide and when a committee has made a report of this kind I submit it would be wrong for Your Honour to deny the House the right of considering any recommendation contained in that report. One cannot compel the government to accept the report because, if it does not like the report, it need only call out its troops to defeat the motion for concurrence. But, I submit our parliamentary history clearly indicates that motions of this kind ought to be entertained by this House. They should be the subject of debate and decision.

May I re-inforce my argument with one more point. Until this particular committee report has been the subject of a motion to concur, it is in limbo. A motion to concur may be moved in this House. The House may also say that the report ought to be sent back to committee and changed, altered or amended. Until that is done there can be no conclusion to this most important report containing extremely important recommendations that are vital to our national security at this particular time.

• (2:30 p.m.)

I cite to Your Honour, from page 692 of Beauchesne's Third Edition, a decision of Mr. Speaker Lemieux:

The report of a Standing Committee should be considered final only when it is adopted because the House can refer it back to the committee with instruction to amend it in any particular.

As I understand these three propositions, when read together, this report must be put to the House pursuant to the Standing Order. Until a report has been discussed and a decision made with respect to it, it is susceptible to change and referral back to the committee. No one knows where we stand on this matter. This is the situation which exists today. Practice and precedent of the past indicate that reports of this kind have, in fact, been put.

In so far as the right of the hon. member is concerned, I defy the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) or any hon. member in this House to indicate that it is the sole privilege of the chairman of a standing committee to put a motion to concur. As far as propriety is concerned, it would certainly be best if this were done as frequently as possible. But if there is a reluctance on the part of the committee chairman to put the motion

because it may be embarrassing to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) or the government, I say that leaves a vacuum which can be entered by any member of the committee. I suggest to Your Honour there is no rule, practice or precedent which denies the right of a member of a committee to put a motion to concur when the chairman of the committee has failed to do so.

The President of the Privy Council said the committee decided it did not want to put the motion. Nothing to that effect appears within the four corners of the committee report. If that was the decision of the committee, it probably would have indicated they were not going to bring in a report and the committee would have acted accordingly. There has been too much of this business of hon. members opposite being strong and bold in words, but weak and snivelling when it comes to action in the House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baldwin:** It is about time we struck out and reinforced the right of a member of this committee to put this kind of motion to the House for a decision.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the right of the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Yewchuk) to make this motion at this time.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I hear members across the way expressing surprise. I suppose it will also surprise them if I say that I rise to support the action of the Chair and the table in placing the motion on the order paper at this time.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I listened with great interest to the non-political statement made by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald). When he began his statement, he said he was going to give us a number of precedents, Standing Orders and citations in support of his case. Being interested in this and being anxious to deal with any of these if I could, I took pen and paper in hand ready to take down all of these precedents, citations and Standing Orders. My sheet of paper is still almost blank.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!