

*Question of Privilege*

any other crown corporation in its competitive capacity.

However, I think the minister has missed the vital point, that if the document is to be confidential and privileged to the government, then certainly neither the president of Trans-Canada Air Lines nor anyone else has any right to quote extracts from that report in substantiation of a particular line of argument. If they are permitted to do that they are advancing the conclusions of that report without the rest of us having any opportunity to study the bases upon which those conclusions were reached. We should have the right to see the computations and arithmetical foundation upon which this alleged loss of \$19,800,000 is based. It is most improper, it seems to me, for use to be made of this report, isolated statements being taken from it and quoted in argument, and at the same time deny hon. members of this house access to the report. As a matter of fact the minister should be concerned about this statement.

It goes much further. My colleague from Winnipeg North Centre was being kind in not reading the rest of this comment. It quotes the president of Trans-Canada Air Lines as saying:

If the Winnipeg base is worth that (\$19,800,000) then Mr. Pearson is the man to decide.

This is a clear allegation that a decision has been made which is uneconomic, unwise; that it will cost the country \$19,800,000; and we have no way of knowing whether or not that is a conclusion which is warranted. The minister said that he could see no objection to releasing parts of the report provided the confidential parts of it were not disclosed. I submit to him that there is no reason why he should not accept this motion. The motion does not demand that the government table the report, but that it should take into consideration the tabling of it. The minister could accept that motion subject to the reservation he has just made, that there are parts of the report which he would consider it advisable to withhold. It seems to me that he should accept the motion now subject to the reservation he has made regarding the confidential sections of the report.

**Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, if I may, I think the point which is of most importance and which should not be lost sight of by the house is that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre raised this matter as a question of privilege. As the house knows, matters of privilege should be raised immediately, and this matter has been under discussion on a previous occasion.

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

**Mr. Chevrier:** I do not use that last argument to suggest that this is not a matter which should be raised as a question of privilege. The point I am raising, however, is this: that this document is not a document of the government; this document is a document of a crown corporation. If there is a question of privilege here the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre must tie in that privilege with the responsibility either of a member of parliament, or of a minister of the crown, or of the government itself. That is the link which is lacking at the moment in order to abide by the rules of the house.

That is why I agree with the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam that what the Minister of Transport has said concerning his desire to give to the house a summary of matters which are not confidential and not of a technical nature indicates the desire of the government to assist hon. members to the extent that it can. But the point, and the only point at issue here in my opinion, is that this is not a document of the government but a document of a crown corporation; and under all the circumstances it seems to me that the house has already accepted the proposition that communications of this nature are privileged.

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Speaker, on the point of order raised by the Minister of Justice, particularly the point about immediacy, may I point out that my question of privilege is based on two reports in the *Winnipeg Free Press* of Wednesday, November 27. Today is Friday, November 29. Even that is fast service. I saw these stories at nine or ten minutes to eleven this morning. I could not have raised a question of privilege much more immediately than I did.

As to the minister's suggestion that this is a report which belongs to a crown corporation, may I point out that it has been admitted several times by the Minister of Transport that he is in possession of a copy. He has made reference to it. He has cited it. He has told us why it cannot be produced. He has told us why he did not wish to disclose it to the hon. member for Winnipeg South. He told us this morning that he is studying whether or not to have extracts made, and who is to make the extracts. So, while the report may have been paid for by Trans-Canada Air Lines, a copy is in the minister's possession, and surely the air line is a responsibility of the government. If the government says this information must be kept confidential, and an emanation of the crown is making parts of it public, I suggest we have a question of privilege and the government itself should redress the wrong that has been done to us by making public at least sections of the report.