

*Transport and Communications*

said: We do not agree with this recommendation and we want the house to turn it down. Then, of course, it would have been up to the house to decide the matter by its vote. Another course the government could have followed, which would have avoided this debate which has proceeded on and off for two or three days, and the great deal of the nastiness we are experiencing, would have been just to accept the report moved by the hon. member for LaSalle (Mr. Lessard). Has not the house the right to express the view that these things said in the report ought to be considered; ought to be done, if you will? If that had happened, if the report had been concurred in, the government of course could have acted upon it or it could have come back in a few days and said to us: We have considered these things, but we do not think they should be carried through.

That happens over and over again. If you will pardon me, Mr. Speaker, I should like to cite an example, though you will be watching me to see that I do not get too far into the substance of it. I am very conscious of this matter. A committee made a unanimous recommendation to Parliament on May 8, 1967, that the pensions of retired civil servants be increased. The government said it was giving consideration to this recommendation. The government has not yet acted upon it; but at least we know where to put the blame. The government has refused to act on that recommendation, but it still stands as a recommendation of the committee.

But in this case the government is not prepared to let the recommendation stand as a recommendation of the committee. It is not prepared to let the house decide whether it wants to say yes or no to this recommendation. It is asking the house—and it has a majority, no doubt, to go through with it if it wants to do so—to say to the committee not only that we do not like what it did, not only are we not prepared to accept it, but we want the committee to go back and bite the dust. We want the committee to change its report, even though the evidence is that it was a unanimous report when the committee brought it in.

• (9:00 p.m.)

For these reasons, I hope that the government will not press this amendment. It would be a magnanimous gesture which would show deference to the way in which parliament should work if the amendment were withdrawn. But if the government cannot do that, then let the motion go over into government

orders and let it die there at the end of the session. There is another motion there to adopt another report, and the same thing would happen to it. If this amendment is carried and the motion as amended is carried, not only will we have had a nasty day in parliament today—and there is no denying that this is what we have had—but we will have something on the record which will not grace the reputation of parliament.

There is no point in multiplying words. I confess I was shocked at what happened today. I said earlier that I had thought I would have the day off so far as speaking was concerned. I know that for anybody to get up and say he did not intend to take part in a debate is usually laughed at, but that was my intention. There were enough people to take part in the debate, especially with respect to the substance of the matter. But I was really shocked over what the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) did when his original amendment was ruled out of order because he called paragraph 5 paragraph 4. All that was necessary then was to designate that paragraph properly, but he had the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand) change other words in the amendment so that instead of the government asking the house to give the committee power to change its recommendation if it so desired, the amendment was worded so that the committee must make that change and it was given no other choice.

Notwithstanding the interjection of the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand), may I say that if his motion passes, the only motion which the committee and the chairman—whether it is the hon. member for LaSalle (Mr. Lessard) or someone else—will be able to accept will be a motion for the deletion of the offending paragraph in the report. As my friend, the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) asks, what will happen if by any chance hon. members do not vote for that motion? Will they be in contempt of parliament? Will we have a scene? Will hon. members be brought to the bar of the house, or perhaps committed to the tower because they have not done what parliament has called upon them to do? Let us just contemplate the utterly ridiculous situation in which this parliament is being put by this amendment, and particularly by the rewording effected by the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. I would not have liked the original motion as moved by the President of the Privy Council, but in retrospect it