

Privileges and Elections

But clearly the hon. member for Manicouagan must admit, as must any hon. member who was on that committee, that this was the intent of my motion. I did not move my resolution and have it adopted by the committee in order to have it hang in the air or die in limbo, where it now happens to be. I moved my motion to have it brought before the house so that parliament would have the opportunity to decide on this matter, so we would have an opportunity as members of parliament from Newfoundland to carry out our mandate in this house. I did not do it frivolously or mischievously. My resolution unfortunately did not contain the words "recommend to the house", but that was clearly the intent of my motion, that was clearly the import of my motion. I will read the motion as it appears at page 108 of Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence No. 6 of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications:

That the Canadian Transport Commission be requested to postpone the implementation of its decision to abandon railway service in Newfoundland until such a time as the committee travel to Newfoundland to study the transportation problems of the Atlantic provinces.

Clearly any reasonable man would know what I had in mind. My motion referred directly to the recommendation of the committee, approved by the committee, that the house empower the committee to study the transportation problems of the Atlantic provinces. I submit that anybody who would hide behind technicalities is merely being the handmaiden of the house leader in this regard.

● (1:30 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. The hon. member has suggested that in some way I was trying to direct the chairman of the committee. He has previously said, and I presume he was sincere, that he was not accusing the chairman of misconduct. Now he says that the hon. member was hiding behind technicalities. I suggest that is unparliamentary and should be withdrawn.

Mr. McGrath: I did not accuse the hon. member for Manicouagan of hiding behind technicalities. I accused the drafters of this report of doing so. It is a natural thing to do if there is a controversial subject involved to stick to the letter of the law and ignore the spirit. That is precisely what they did. I suggest they have lost the meaning of the whole

thing, as is evident from the report of the committee. The house leader took exception to what I said when I suggested they were perhaps obliging him in some way by doing this. I will refer to the first time that my suspicions were aroused. I directed a question to him on December 6 which can be found at page 3587 of *Hansard*. I asked the house leader what became of my resolution, why it was not in the second report now before the house. The house leader said in his reply:

I have not studied this; I am advised the resolution was passed but that it was out of order.

Surely that would arouse the suspicions of any reasonable member of the house with regard to a resolution that dealt with a controversial subject, and it would indicate that the government did not want this matter brought before the house.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McGrath: There was an interjection at that time also.

An hon. Member: May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I have limited time only. The hon. member made his contributions in the committee and perhaps he could speak here before the debate is over. I refer to the hon. member who asked the question. He was a member of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections so he will have knowledge of this. The house leader went on to say:

Under the circumstances I take it that it is null and has no effect, but I have not examined the question.

I say to the house leader that we requested he be called as a witness before the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. We made our request through the usual channels. We made that request at the first meeting of the committee and we further submitted it to the steering committee at its first meeting. My recollection is that it was agreed to at that time. Yet at the last public meeting of the committee the hon. member for Montmorency (Mr. Laflamme), who was the chairman of the committee, ruled that he saw no reason to call the President of the Privy Council before the committee.

An hon. Member: Rightly so.

Mr. McGrath: I think it is regrettable because it leaves this matter up in the air, and I refer again to the remarks of the house