

Transport and Communications

hon. member rose and sought the floor I would recognize him. But my understanding is that he did not rise; he bowed to the Chair for the purpose of indicating that he was moving the motion. If the hon. member rises, I recognize that as chairman of the committee he would be given preference. But I would think this might perhaps be wishful thinking on the part of the hon. member for Peace River.

• (3:30 p.m.)

Mr. Baldwin: In making the point of order I am prepared to say that if there is any dispute I would be perfectly prepared to move that the hon. member for LaSalle be now heard.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): As always, one can only be amused by the antics of the hon. member for Peace River.

Mr. Dinsdale: You should see yourself.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I must say that these contributions from the other side are very interesting. They are probably better than we will get for the rest of the debate.

As I have already indicated previously in my remarks on this question, the government has no difficulty in accepting the initial part of the report of the standing committee. In particular we take no exception to the first of the recommendations made, except perhaps to say that we feel that for the benefit of maritime shippers the freeze should not be limited to the period mentioned by the committee but should be extended for the period of a full year. But I make no complaint on this point, and a bill to that effect has now been introduced in the house.

I should like, however, to address my remarks to the second of the two recommendations of the committee, to wit:

—the order of the Canadian Transport Commission, authorizing the Canadian National Railways to suspend rail passenger service in Newfoundland on April 5 1969, be left in abeyance, until your committee tables its complete report in respect to this question.

I should now like to suggest to the house—and this was referred to by Mr. Speaker in his opinion delivered yesterday—that although this report has been found to be in order the house should not concur in it.

An hon. Member: Does Mr. Pickersgill think this?

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I am flattered the hon. member thinks I have the clarity and the agility of thought of the president of the Canadian Transport Commission.

My contentions are the ones that I mentioned yesterday. The principal one is that the house should not endeavour to do by a resolution what can only be done by a statute. In other words, we should not try by a motion of this kind to set aside an act of parliament. As hon. members know, and as was already pointed out, in previous years parliament has indicated that the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian Transport Commission as autonomous organizations should assume the responsibility for decisions with respect to rail line abandonment. I think it is a salutary principle for parliament, having given that authority to those two bodies with respect to the management of this problem, to permit these bodies to carry out their responsibilities until parliament chooses by an appropriate amending statute to change the authority in that regard.

Hon. members opposite appear to be of the opinion that the house should ignore legislation giving the Canadian Transport Commission and the C.N.R. the authority to make decisions on questions of abandonment of rail service. I do not share their view, and I submit to the house that if we are not proposing to change the statute law in this regard—and the position of the government is that we should not change it—we should not give to the two bodies directions of the kind suggested in the proposed report.

For these reasons I move:

That the said report be not now concurred in but that it be recommitted to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications with instruction that they have power to amend the same by deleting the fourth paragraph thereof, which reads as follows: "Your committee recommends that the order of the Canadian Transport Commission, authorizing the Canadian National Railways to suspend rail passenger service in Newfoundland on April 5, 1969, be left in abeyance, until your committee tables its complete report in respect to this question."

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there agreement to the amendment?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): May I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My point of order is that the amendment is defective in that it refers to certain words as being in the fourth paragraph of the report. As I read them they are in the fifth paragraph of the report. The other day Your Honour ruled