

*Adjournment Motion*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. In accordance with Standing Order 40, a motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been made and seconded at this time. Therefore, the question is that this House do now adjourn.

**Mr. Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I have a question of privilege.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The question of privilege may be raised on the same point tomorrow, but we are within the adjournment hour now.

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**PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT  
MOTION**

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

TRANSPORT—STUDY OF RAILWAY PASSENGER SERVICE  
IN SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO BY TRANSPORT  
COMMISSION—LOCAL CONSULTATION

**Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot):** Mr. Speaker, for many months a number of members have been trying in vain to find out what, if anything, the Department of Transport has been doing about passenger rail service in southwestern Ontario. For many weeks the Canadian Transport Commission study of this service in that area of Canada has been shrouded in secrecy. My colleagues and I have been denied any information by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) regarding the terms of reference of the study, its progress, or its conclusions or recommendations. We were led to believe, most explicitly, by the minister that the study involved local consultation. Those of us in the area affected searched far and wide in our ridings for someone, anyone, who had been consulted by the CTC, all to no avail. This, of course, prompted my question to the minister on November 22 last.

It was not until the Commission's chairman, Hon. J. Edgar Benson, appeared before the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates that I was able to determine that there was, in fact, no consultation with local people or officials. To the contrary, the CTC appears to be making two reports, the first being of an historical nature with possible solutions and recommendations and the second a survey or sampling of the needs of 1200 families in the affected area. The first study, according to my information, has been in the hands of the Minister of Transport for approximately two weeks. In response to my inquiry during the question period today, he did not deny that he had the report but he refuses to make it available to members of parliament and, even more important, to the communities of southwestern Ontario, isolated from rail transport.

If I understood him correctly today, the course of action of the minister defies reason and boggles the imagination. He seems to have adopted a four-step procedure: first, consider the CTC report; second, consult with the Prov-

[Mr. Bell.]

ince of Ontario; third, make a decision and, fourth, inform the House of Commons. This is a backwards procedure and that has been the difficulty from the very beginning of this travesty in passenger rail service. It seems to me that whenever the Department of Transport and the CTC have presented to them a reasonable course of action they consider it and then proceed to do the exact opposite. Surely, it is reasonable that the report, paid for by the taxpayers, should be made available to the taxpayers before any decision is made; indeed, I would think even before the Province of Ontario is consulted.

I know that there are circumstances where certain reports, for various good reasons, need not be made public immediately, indeed if ever. But the minister has been hiding behind this report for months. He has repeatedly used it as a crutch when I have tried to secure information or commitments. To use Mr. Benson's words, this study is "historical—poses several courses of action in a solution to the problem." If this be true what then is there to hide? Why does the minister not want the reaction of members of all parties whose ridings are in the area?

Finally, how can the minister make any valid decision based on his study of the CTC report without the benefit of the reaction of the taxpayers of southwestern Ontario? Therefore, I have two areas of concern this evening, Mr. Speaker. First, in my question of November 22 I pointed out to the minister that, despite his assurances, the CTC had not consulted any local people, and I asked him whether he approved of the study being conducted and completed without local consultation. I quote his reply:

I think it was stated before the Standing Committee by Mr. Benson that these consultations are going to take place and that the report will likely be ready in a few weeks.

I say with respect, Mr. Speaker, that I believe all of us would interpret that answer to mean that there was to be local consultation before the completion of the report. That is not what has happened. The minister now has the report. There has been no local consultation. Not one single municipal official or representative has had any opportunity to offer advice or information. Indeed, I cannot find one single constituent who has been consulted.

In the light of these circumstances I can only accept Mr. Benson's version of what is taking place, that is, that there are two reports. The first, involving no consultation, was completed some weeks ago and, I believe, has been in the minister's hands since about December 4. The second report is to be some kind of a Gallup poll or sampling of 1,200 families in the area. This, to my knowledge, has not even been commenced.

This brings us to my second problem, and that is what the minister said today in reply to my question. If I understood him correctly, he indicated that the report had been received and was being studied. He indicated that he wanted to discuss it with the province of Ontario, and then I believe he said "even before that I hope we will reach some decision concerning this report." Does this mean a decision will be made before discussing it with the province? If so, what is the point of any discussion? When the minister says "we will reach some decision concerning the report" does he mean he will decide if it is good or bad? Does he mean he will decide whether or not he will