

Transport and Communications

seek to overturn established government policy. I think this point should be taken into consideration as well.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I was not a member of the committee which considered the bill that has been reported today—

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): That will be reported.

Mr. MacEachen:—that will be reported. As I say, I was not a member of the committee that considered Bill C-164, but I am a member of the House which gave the reference to the committee. The reference given to the committee is a narrow one authorizing the standing committee to consider Bill C-164. The committee is limited by that reference and, however important other issues are, they cannot be referred back to the House for a decision when the committee itself is not authorized by the House to consider or to report upon them. The committee is obligated to consider the bill and to report the bill.

If the subject matter of the sixth report were relevant to the principle of the bill, if it were germane to the clauses or to any particular clause of the bill, then it would be possible for the committee to deal with the matter of Wardair within the confines of the bill. That would be a proper course. Indeed, when the bill comes back to the House, if the subject of Wardair is relevant to any part of the bill it is open to hon. members to amend that part of the bill in order to ensure that this particular item becomes part of the law. But I suggest it is not particularly relevant to the bill itself and that it cannot be reported in this way or dealt with in the House because the committee did not have the authority to make that decision or recommendation. I do not take issue with the hon. member's assertion about the importance of the matter or the importance of standing committees, but I do support your earlier position, Mr. Speaker, that it is quite contrary to the rules to move concurrence in this particular report at this stage.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker,—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has spoken on the point of order but I am sure the House would want to hear him again. I believe he has a further comment to make.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I have a further comment to make only because it was suggested, quite correctly and accurately, that I had advised the mover of the motion in the first instance that I felt it was out of order in the manner in which he was moving it, and I did suggest that he change it in such a way as to make it acceptable. I think the House should be made aware of the manner in which I suggested it should be changed so that we might be better able to judge the intent of the motion.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, we were dealing with a financing bill to authorize the sum of \$147 million, of which \$2.7 million has already been spent on Wardair, but is held in escrow until the deal is finalized. The mover of the motion first put it in this manner. "That this committee opposes the purchase of 30 per cent of Wardair stock by Air Canada." I suggested to the mover that the committee could not go on record as opposing it and that we really

[Mr. MacKay.]

only had the ability to advise and ask the government, or in essence ask parliament, to consider what we had studied and what was referred to us. In essence Bill C-164 was referred to us, dealing with Air Canada financing, and part of its financing was in actual fact spent on this purchase. I advised the mover of the motion that I might find his concept in order if he could word his motion in such a way that the committee would ask the government or ask parliament—in fact the exact words I used were "the House"—to consider the advisability of refusing this. With the motion couched in those words, I was certainly under the impression, after having served for 15 years on committees, that it would fall within the terms of reference of the Committee to study CNR and Air Canada financing up until June 30, 1974, in which period this expenditure fell, and in the committee we were informed that Air Canada was in fact prepared to expend \$2.7 million.

I want you to rest assured, Mr. Speaker, that no matter how you rule on this motion you will in no way inhibit my participation as chairman of the transport committee. I will continue to rule, I will continue to adjudicate or judge the actions of that committee in as fair and impartial a manner as is within my capabilities.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): No matter how you rule in this instance, Mr. Speaker, I will continue to carry on and will not feel hampered or encumbered at all by your ruling. I want you to be assured of that.

I have studied the references in *Votes and Proceedings* of June, 1971, and of February 16, 1971, when the committee structure was somewhat different from what it is today. At that time committees were made up of an overwhelming majority of government members. Now we have a committee system that is nearly equal in balance, and I can assure you that it is sometimes difficult to wrestle with that kind of equal balance. I felt at the time that I was doing the right thing, I still do and I will continue to do so no matter how you rule.

Mr. Speaker: I see that the hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge is rising to participate. It seems to me that hon. members who have spoken up to this point have greatly helped and assisted the Chair, to the point where I would be prepared to make a ruling. However, I will listen to the hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge if he has comments to make additional to those already made for the guidance of the Chair.

Mr. Saltsman: Mr. Speaker, up until this point we have mainly heard from members who support the motion and who feel that a committee should have the right and authority to deal with matters that are usually reserved for decision by the House of Commons. May I, as a private member, protest that viewpoint. I am not prepared to be bound by decisions of committees, particularly knowing how the committees operate. I am prepared to be bound by decisions of the House. Although I do not always agree, at least there are 264 members here. I repeat that I am not prepared to have some clique on a committee decide what I am going to be in favour of.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): What did he refer to me as?