

*Transport and Communications*

reversal in this hierarchy. Apparently, the power of these bodies has changed so that the Canadian Transport Commission is now on top and parliament is second. I do not know where we put C.N.R. but the important fact is that parliament has assumed a second rate position in terms of the decision making process relating to transportation in Canada. This is the only conclusion I can draw, because certainly parliament does not have the supreme power in this situation.

In the two or three minutes I have left, I should like to give a brief résumé of some of the events connected with the situation because I still feel many hon. members are not fully aware of some of the facts surrounding the case. This is, perhaps, the reason for the confusion in the mind of the house leader. As everyone knows, in 1949 Newfoundland became the tenth province of Canada. At that time we entered into terms of union with the Canadian nation. One of these terms of union as described by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) this afternoon in some detail, dealt with the responsibility of the federal government relating to transportation. I am referring to term 31 under which the province was relieved of its responsibility to maintain the rail passenger service, which responsibility was assumed by the federal government.

The government then delegated this responsibility to the C.N.R. which has been operating under that kind of arrangement ever since. About two years ago the Canadian Transport Commission was appointed and was given certain terms of reference and responsibilities with respect to decisions regarding rail passenger service as well as other modes of transportation in Canada. The railway committee of the Canadian Transport Commission then made a recommendation that the rail passenger service in the province of Newfoundland be abandoned. The Canadian Transport Commission accepted this recommendation, subject to certain conditions.

I should now like to make a point which has previously been made, and I hope the house leader will pay some attention because he might learn a thing or two on a subject with which apparently he is not very conversant. The Canadian Transport Commission decided to abandon the rail passenger service in Newfoundland subject to the provision of a bus service of acceptable standards. Only a few minutes ago my friend to my left made reference to the fact that the C.N.R. has already agreed to extend the service beyond

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

the April 15 deadline which was set by the C.T.C. The hon. member for St. John's East pointed out that the provincial legislature reached what was, I believe, a unanimous decision to recommend that the train service be continued. Here we have two bodies, one a provincial legislature and another merely a Crown corporation, both of which made a recommendation to extend the date beyond the April 15 deadline. The committee of the house visited the Atlantic region, and both previous to and since its visit, it has made reports on the state of transportation in the Atlantic region, one of which contained the recommendation now before us.

The committee is asking parliament to use its power, given under the Railway Act, to do exactly what it is empowered to do under this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it six o'clock.

Mr. Deachman: It is not six o'clock yet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until 8 p.m.

It being six o'clock, the house took recess.

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**AFTER RECESS**

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Lundrigan: Several hon. members had an opportunity this afternoon to review in some detail the principal events leading to the debate in which we are now engaged. I certainly do not wish to take time reiterating what has already been said.

My hon. friend from St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) made a presentation which set the record straight and left no doubt in anybody's mind that this issue should never have been allowed to materialize let alone reach the point where there is a danger of the committee report not being accepted. I am referring to the report of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications which was agreed to unanimously by all members present; the only exceptions were one or two absentees. This report is now before us for concurrence but it is being vetoed by the leader of the house and by several other hon. members who have been browbeaten or induced by some means or other to adopt his way of thinking.

I had intended to speak about the railway question, but perhaps the railway is now a