

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

DISCUSSION UPON THE CALLING OF THE ORDER FOR A MOTION TO CONCUR IN FIFTH REPORT—RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

On the order:

March 21, 1969—Mr. Lessard (LaSalle) (Chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications):

That the Fifth report of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications, presented to the House on Wednesday, March 19, 1969, be concurred in.

Mr. Speaker: I remind hon. members that when this motion was raised last week the Chair suggested that hon. members interested in the procedural aspects of the motion might be given an opportunity to think over the matter of their arguments. From the conversation I had with hon. members shortly before the opening of the house this afternoon I understand there is now a disposition to proceed with the procedural argument. If this is the case I should like to hear hon. members.

I might add if I may at this time that the Speaker's mind has been occupied for some time now with questions of privilege. Therefore, I should like, with the approval of hon. members, to suggest that if they will present their arguments now, I would have a look at the blues and give an opinion later this afternoon after I have had an opportunity to look at the learned arguments which I know will be submitted for the guidance of the Chair.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, in view of the circumstances surrounding this matter it might be well very briefly to refresh the memory of members of the house. I have always found this to be a useful exercise especially in respect of those members sitting to Your Honour's right; their memories frequently need refreshing.

This matter arises out of a rather peculiar set of facts. Last fall the Committee on Transport and Communications brought into the house a series of recommendations. Hon. members of the opposition on this side took exception to this report on the ground that it did not contain a very vital recommendation which was founded on a motion presented before the committee. As a result the matter was referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. Following that a reasoned settlement was made and on January 17 the

Transport and Communications

President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) moved:

That the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications be empowered to consider and report upon the problems of transportation in the Atlantic Provinces, and that, for the purposes of its inquiry, the Committee be empowered to adjourn from place to place within Canada and the Clerk and the necessary supporting staff be authorized to accompany the Committee.

Following that the committee reported. The gist of its report, which is the subject we are considering outside of the formal and introductory measure is contained in two very brief paragraphs which if I may I should like to place on the record.

Your Committee recommends that Subsection 4 of Section 335 of the Railway Act be amended and the freeze extended to December 31, 1969.

And again:

Your Committee recommends that the Order of the Canadian Transport Commission, authorizing the Canadian National Railways to suspend rail passenger service in Newfoundland—

This as hon. members know has reference to the passenger train known in Newfoundland as the *Bullet*.

—on April 5, 1969, be left in abeyance, until your Committee tables its complete report in respect to this question.

As I understand the matter there are two or three particular suggestions contained in the argument made by the President of the Privy Council and referred to by Your Honour when you summed up on the 27th of this month, as it appears in *Hansard*. The first suggestion is that the report goes beyond the terms of reference by which this house authorized this committee to make certain inquiries. Let me deal with that. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that cannot be regarded as a very serious argument. If so, then over the course of the years I have been here the hundreds of committee reports which have been made based upon terms of reference no wider than this are all out of order.

The terms of reference were that the committee be empowered to consider and report upon the problems of transportation in the Atlantic provinces. I think we can all see that both the recommendations touch upon problems of communication and transportation in the Atlantic provinces. If such is the case then surely the committee is entitled to examine upon them and report upon them. I do not think this is an argument which will be seriously pursued.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I did not make it.