

*Transport and Communications*

of the house quarrels so much. The resolution of November 28 stated:

That the Canadian Transport Commission be requested to postpone the implementation of its decision to abandon railway services in Newfoundland until such time as the committee travels to Newfoundland to study the transportation problems of the Atlantic provinces.

That report was the subject of dispute in the house. It became the substance of a question of privilege on which I moved a motion. Mr. Speaker, in his wisdom, ruled that there was a *prima facie* case of privilege and referred the matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. Why? Because the report did not contain the very resolution which is the essence of the second part of the fifth report now before the house, something which has again been challenged by the leader of the house.

The third report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections which dealt with this matter is now before the house. We have asked on a number of occasions that the government bring this matter forward; it is order No. 54 under government orders. We made this request so that we might have the opportunity to debate the matter in the house. The request was denied.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** May I ask the hon. member a question? Does he know that it is being called as the second order of business for today?

**Mr. McGrath:** I am glad it is being called as the second order of business for today. But if we could resolve the matter before us the debate on the third report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections might become superfluous. The point I am making is that if it had been called earlier there would have been no necessity for the debate in which we are now engaged. The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce says that the fifth report of the Transport Committee is a travesty. I say to him that if the house accepts the amendment the consequence will be a travesty of our proceedings and it will make a mockery of the committee system. I say this as one who has the honour to be a member of the Transport Committee, as is the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, the hon. member for LaSalle (Mr. Lessard), and the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Mahoney)—a very diligent and attentive member of the committee, I might say. These are the only members of the committee, I note, who thought it worth their while to be present in the house today for this debate. Apparently

[Mr. McGrath.]

the others did not even consider it important enough to come here to defend the very report which they prepared and agreed to unanimously.

● (5:00 p.m.)

I compliment hon. members who have shown interest and attention in the house today. I was impressed with the work of the Transport Committee, Mr. Speaker. Notwithstanding what the house leader may try to interject, the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications has had two outstanding chairmen. If the house leader had left the hon. member for Manicougan (Mr. Blouin) alone, he would have been an outstanding chairman. Unfortunately the hon. member for Manicougan took ill and was in hospital. We are all happy to know he has recovered and is back in the house.

The hon. member's recovery, Mr. Speaker, is a mixed blessing. During his stay in hospital the hon. member for LaSalle (Mr. Lessard) was appointed the new chairman. He has been an outstanding chairman of committees of the House of Commons. He has been an outstanding member of the house for the past 20 years. It was an affront and an insult to the hon. member for LaSalle not to permit him to stand in his place today to defend his own report. One would think it was the house leader rather than the committee that sponsored the report. I hope before this debate concludes the chairman of the committee will have a chance to defend this report which was adopted unanimously by the committee.

I did some research on the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications. I was rather impressed with the record of the committee. Since last September the committee has sat for 26 days, a total of 85 hours and 15 minutes. Following the reference from parliament of January 17, 1969, the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications met for 16 continuous days, a total of 65 hours. Those hours were confined mostly to the committee's study of the transportation problems in the Atlantic provinces which the house leader finds so amusing. I can assure him if he lived in the Atlantic provinces he would not find them at all amusing.

During that tour the committee received 105 briefs and heard 174 witnesses. There was no time for relaxation or entertainment of any kind. The committee had to work morning, noon and night in the four capitals of the Atlantic provinces. The proceedings of the committee during its tour of the Atlantic provinces still have not been printed and yet