

*Motions for Papers*

cepted what is a well established precedent both in Westminster and in this house.

So, Mr. Speaker, I end by once more appealing to the good nature of the hon. member for Lapointe. I say to him with unfeigned sincerity that I appreciate his interest and his desire to obtain information on this important subject, and if he places his question on the order paper I shall endeavour to give it immediate attention and have it answered, bearing in mind the great amount of work involved. But I again ask him to withdraw his motion.

**Hon. J. Watson MacNaught (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether I could make an appeal to the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) to withdraw his motion. I think it is obvious from the remarks of the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Pennell) that no such report exists. The hon. member for Lapointe has pursued his argument very well and has put his case before the house. I think now that the best interests of parliament would be served if he would withdraw his motion.

[Translation]

**Mr. Grégoire:** Mr. Speaker, if I may be allowed, in reply, to answer the Solicitor General (Mr. MacNaught), on November 12, 1963, I mentioned figures in this house. At that time—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I wonder whether the procedure followed by the house at present is in order. The Solicitor General asked a question, but on the other hand the hon. member for Lapointe has already contributed to the debate and, according to standing orders, the hon. member cannot speak a second time, except under special circumstances provided for in standing order 37. Nevertheless, if he has the unanimous consent of the house, it may be possible to allow him to answer the suggestion made by the Solicitor General.

[Text]

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Grégoire:** Mr. Speaker, in answer to the question asked by the Solicitor General, on November 12, 1963, certain official reports were compiled by various departments and crown corporations. I had given those figures to the house, and they were most instructive. But my figures were said to be incorrect. At that time we were told that we would be given the true figures.

On August 7, I again quoted official figures provided by officers of the Department of Finance. Again I was told that my figures were not correct. Even the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette) said that my figures were inaccurate. In due course, the Minister of Finance himself, as reported on page 6554 of *Hansard*, stated that his officials were in the process of allocating expenditures by provinces.

All I want to find out is this. Can we know what work has been done by officials of the Department of Finance, not with respect to question No. 1,755 mentioned a moment ago by the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Pennell), but rather concerning the amount of taxes and duties of all kinds collected by the federal government in each province and the amount spent in each province? Could we get detailed information in that respect? That is what we want to know. We are not concerned with replies to other questions which do not deal with the same point.

Is that report ready or is it being prepared? If it is ready, we would like to see it. Otherwise, if it is still being prepared, we would like to know when it will be tabled, since the Minister of Finance has told us that his officials have been working on it for some months now.

[Text]

**Mr. Pennell:** Mr. Speaker, if I may be permitted to reply, I can only repeat what I said earlier, that the department is collecting a great deal of information to answer all these questions. The hon. member refers to reports. Perhaps he prefers to call them reports. We have been gathering all this material, and memoranda pass back and forth among the officials of the department. This information eventually finds its way into the hands of the minister who answers the questions.

As I pointed out to the hon. member, if we followed his request we would be violating a long established and sensible rule of this house, that correspondence between officials and the minister ought not to be made public. I do not think I need explain why that rule has been followed for such a lengthy period of time. This rule has been accepted by the house and I think it applies to the situation today.

I wish again to emphasize that at no time did the minister undertake to table a parliamentary report, in that sense of the word.