

Bell Canada Rate Increases

This is a very touching situation. The parents of this young man have been trying since 1965 to find out something concerning their son and the other two Canadians who disappeared at the same time. They have had a harrowing experience for eight long years. Some have endeavoured to get an answer to this question and have made inquiries of the Department of External Affairs, but without success. The Secretary of State for External Affairs was over there. The question could easily be answered and should be answered. No one who has not had a relative missing with no report of the missing person for years can fully appreciate how terrible is the plight for the mother and father of this young man.

• (1420)

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I have approved the answer to the question and I do not understand why it was not given today. I will make inquiries, but may I say I have answered oral questions about these people who disappeared, and I share the right hon. gentleman's concern.

Mr. Diefenbaker: With no information in the oral answers.

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if we can have some assurance that *Hansard* will be published on time tomorrow in view of the fact more questions on the order paper have been answered than at almost any other previous session of parliament, and answered promptly by the government.

Mr. Baldwin: Go back three years.

An hon. Member: You haven't even come close to it.

Mr. Hees: Never was such a large backlog answered with so little.

Mr. Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, I have had a question on the order paper since January 4, the first day the House sat. I should like the assurance of the parliamentary secretary that the question will be answered by Wednesday.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I will be delighted to look into it.

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26**COMMUNICATIONS****BELL CANADA RATE INCREASES**

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), to move the adjournment of the House under Standing Order 26 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, the decision of the Canadian Transport Commission to grant Bell Canada almost all the rate increases it requested in its application A, and the need for the government to suspend the application of the decision immediately and to consider rescinding it as unacceptable and contrary to the public interest.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for York South has given the Chair the required notice of his intention to propose this motion under the terms of Standing Order 26. Since then I have given the matter very serious thought, but even at this moment I feel that the decision should perhaps be delayed for a while as authorized by the Standing Order. I appreciate, as the hon. member does, and I am sure as all hon. members do, how important this matter is. I recognize it is a matter of urgency, a matter of national importance and one of concern to all members of the House.

What concerns me is that perhaps the method proposed under Standing Order 26 for discussion of this important matter may not be the best in the world and not the best in the circumstances. Hon. members know that a debate under Standing Order 26 is really an open-ended debate with no motion before the House except that the House adjourn, and the adoption of such a motion means that hon. members go home. I am not sure whether, in the circumstances and in view of the importance and interest in this matter, the best way would be to have a debate under Standing Order 26. It is a matter of substance and perhaps we should have it before us under a substantive motion rather than under a motion to adjourn the House.

It is because of this uncertainty and these qualms that I would like to be given an opportunity to give the matter further thought, perhaps in light of the question period and what may transpire later this afternoon, and then make a ruling, as I am authorized to do under Standing Order 26, later this afternoon, in any event at or before five o'clock. If there is to be a debate today it would take place at eight o'clock this evening, but at or before five the Chair will be in a better position to make a more informed and enlightened decision.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**COMMUNICATIONS**

BELL CANADA AND CN-CP TELECOMMUNICATIONS RATE INCREASES—GOVERNMENT INTENTION RESPECTING REVIEW BY TRANSPORT COMMISSION—CABINET CONSIDERATION

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the appeal made by the Minister of Finance to labour and business to use restraint this year, I should like to ask whether the government intends to ask the Canadian Transport Commission to review its recent decisions granting increases in rates to Bell Canada and to CN-CP Telecommunications?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are considering this question, and if an announcement is to be made it will be made.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the cabinet is reviewing this recent decision