

privilege during question period. All that is happening is that the Chair exercises a discretion to defer the matter until the end of the question period. The Chair does not have the absolute right to defer the matter to the end of the question period, and today, as I would have done on any other day, I indicated when the point of order was raised that I would defer it to the end of the question period.

I believe on one occasion, if I recall, the late right hon. member for Prince Albert and other hon. members raised matters which were so fundamental to the progress of business in the House that the matter had to be taken into account at once, and that discretion always remains in the Chair.

In summary, therefore, I return the hon. member to the two points, first, that the practice is not one which the House is compelled to follow. It is one which I believe the House wishes to follow, and if the House wants to tell me that it does not wish to do so, then, of course, I am bound by that, and we will revert to the previous practice.

Second, the Chair always has—I want to make it clear that the hon. member is correct in his second premise as well—the discretion to take a matter into account if the Chair feels that the matter requires to be taken into account at that very point and that the progress of the question period must be arrested in order to take the matter into consideration. There have been some and there will continue to be questions which so fundamentally relate to the progress of the business of the House that they must be dealt with then.

I think I will always indicate to the House, as I did today, that my preference would be to take these matters at 12 o'clock; however, if an hon. member insists that it be done, he has the right always to explain to the House why the matter must be taken into account at that time, and then I have to exercise that discretion.

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PRIVILEGE

Mr. Speaker: I have six notices of questions of privilege. The first was received from the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom). The six are from the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville, the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid), the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes), the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert), the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) and the hon. member for York West (Mr. Fleming).

MR. NYSTROM—CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF TASK FORCE ON GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I am raising this question of privilege at the first opportunity I have.

Privilege—Mr. Nystrom

I think it is a very serious question of privilege which infringes upon my rights and privileges as a member of Parliament. It arises out of a report which was tabled by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) yesterday in the Standing Committee on Transport. It is a report entitled "Final Report of the Emergency Grain Movement Task Force, October 30, 1979".

My question of privilege also arises out of a question on the order paper which was put there by myself and which was responded to by the government on December 5. The question was as follows:

What budget has been made available to the Grain Transportation Task Force and specifically, what amounts have been budgeted for (a) transportation and communications (b) professional services (c) printing and distribution of report(s) (d) material and supplies (e) salaries—

The second part of the question was as follows:

Are all members of the committee also members of the Progressive Conservative party?

The answer to the question whether all members of this task force are Conservative members was "Yes". There were three members on that task force. One was the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta). Another was the hon. member for Kindersley-Lloydminster (Mr. McKnight). Another was an hon. member from Alberta, and I believe his riding is Wetaskiwin. That information presents me with a problem because I think it infringes upon my privileges as a member of Parliament.

A similar question was raised in this House on November 5 by the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Ethier). I say similar because it dealt with a similar task force which was headed, I believe, by the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave) and which dealt with an inquiry on beef imports. I believe my question is different because we have this report which was tabled before the Standing Committee on Transport yesterday, and we now have information on the order paper that the federal government paid with public funds for the printing of this report. It paid for travel by the members of Parliament involved, and it paid for some other services such as the translating of the report which is before us today.

Essentially what happened was that the transportation and communication cost \$6,943, professional services \$1,552, printing and distribution \$400 and material and supplies \$266, and the cost of that report to the public treasury was \$9,161. I have since also learned that that is not really the only cost. The task force also borrowed the services of at least one secretary from the grains group. It also had the use, I believe, of other technical advice, technical information and technical expertise from other departments or agencies of the Government of Canada.

My question of privilege is the following: It is my understanding from conversations I have had with the opposition House leader and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) that never before in the history of this Parliament have we seen a minister of the Crown select members of Parliament from his own party to conduct a study on an important area of policy.