

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 23, 1972

The House met at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MR. MATTE—ALLEGED INACCURATE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I have repeatedly, over the past few weeks, sought clarification of the confusion related to the Local Initiatives Program.

The replies to my oral questions seem to be absolutely contradictory to facts and they mislead the House.

When questioned by the hon. member for Portneuf (Mr. Godin) on February 28 last, the parliamentary secretary stated that on February 25 there were still \$4,000,000 to distribute. The Minister of Labour, on March 2, gave a vague reply to a question on the same subject posed by my colleague from Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert).

As for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), he replied that he would take under advisement the questions put by the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Latulippe) and myself as to the possibility of increasing or transferring funds. Nothing further was done about that.

Nor have I been able, in spite of several questions, to determine when funds available for Quebec were used up.

Mr. Speaker, such a procedure is a direct infringement on our rights and privileges as representatives of the people.

It is unacceptable that we should be unable to give accurate information to some 700 Quebec municipalities which have been misinformed and frustrated, and all the more since the statements of the Quebec minister in charge contradict allegations of officials of the Department of Manpower and Immigration.

We therefore demand an official statement from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) or the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Mackasey) in this connection.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member gave notice of the matter he has just brought to the attention of the House.

The hon. member knows that, under Standing Order 17, he must advise the Chair not only of his intention to raise a question of privilege but also of the subject of the question.

To some extent, his notice may not have been in order. In any event, the matter he just brought up is more in the nature of a grievance than a question of privilege. His presentation was not followed by a motion.

Under those circumstances, I doubt that it would be in order to deal with the matter further as a question of privilege.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

First report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs—Mr. Gervais.

[Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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[English]

HARBOURS

PRINCE RUPERT—INCLUSION AS NATIONAL HARBOURS BOARD PORT—STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce to the House that the port of Prince Rupert will become the tenth National Harbours Board port.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jamieson: Two recommendations to the Governor in Council that will have an important bearing on the future of Prince Rupert have been accepted. One recommendation extends the limits of Prince Rupert harbour and transfers the administration, management and control of the harbour to the National Harbours Board. The other confirms the acceptance by Canada of the transfer by the province of British Columbia of the administration, control and benefit of certain Crown lands at Prince Rupert for the purpose of operating a national harbour.

• (1410)

I am looking forward to inviting representatives of the community to serve as members of the Port of Prince Rupert Authority, which will be created at the earliest possible opportunity.

I will also ask the National Harbours Board to invite proposals that will lead to the establishment of a major modern grain transshipment facility at Prince Rupert. This is in anticipation of a larger proportion of grain shipments to China and Russia and the Pacific rim countries being directed over the northern route, thus relieving congestion in the Fraser River canyon and elsewhere.

The National Harbours Board will also undertake studies related to its own possible involvement in such facilities. I want to emphasize that the federal government is seeking to further the development of the port of Prince Rupert in conjunction with the development of other ports, such as the port of Vancouver. The objective is to provide both greater capacity and greater flexibility, and to improve access to the Pacific.