

possession of the government dated since January 1, 1966, concerning the British Columbia Hydro rail route from the Matsqui area to Roberts Bank.

Motion agreed to.

CONSTRUCTION CLAIMS, GREAT SLAVE  
LAKE RAILWAY

Motion No. 26—**Mr. Schreyer:**

That an Order of the House do issue for a copy of all documents and correspondence exchanged between any federal department or Crown corporation and Mr. McDonald, lawyer, of the City of Regina, relative to the claims against the C.N.R. made by any one of the construction firms engaged in the construction of the Great Slave Lake Railway.

Motion agreed to.

JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF ROBERTS BANK

Motion No. 18—**Mr. Rose:**

That an humble Address be presented to His Excellency praying that he will cause to be laid before this House a copy of all correspondence, memoranda and other communications received by any member of the administration and prepared by any person in the Public Service of Canada since January 1, 1967, relating to the joint Federal-Provincial development of the Roberts Bank Port in British Columbia, including any railways connected thereto.

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Minister of Transport. I think the hon. member will appreciate that this motion relates to correspondence between public servants, who are advisers to the minister, and the government. This type of correspondence has always been claimed to be privileged and not to constitute a public document. For these reasons I wonder if the hon. member would be prepared to withdraw his motion.

**Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West):** No, Mr. Speaker. If there is going to be any argument about this I prefer to have the motion transferred for debate.

**Mr. Speaker:** Motion No. 18 is transferred for debate pursuant to standing order 47.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, motion No. 24 was on today's list, and I was asked by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) to move it on his behalf.

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the absence of the hon. member I wonder if it could be allowed to stand for another day so I might have an opportunity of discussing it with him.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is this agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

*Inquiries of the Ministry*  
**HEALTH AND WELFARE**

MEDICARE—PREMIUM REDUCTIONS BY PROVINCES RECEIVING FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. Is it the policy of the government that a province which is receiving a contribution from the federal government toward the cost of its medicare program ought to reduce any premiums charged by it, and thus pass along the federal contribution to the subscribers?

**Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance):** It would be the sincere hope of this government, Mr. Speaker, that our contribution toward medicare would be reflected in a reduction of the premiums that are paid by Canadians for medicare rather than having the funds used for other purposes.

**Mr. Stanfield:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has any province which has entered into an agreement with the federal government been asked to undertake such a reduction in its premiums?

**Mr. Benson:** I do not believe we have the legal right, under the medicare act, to require the provinces to do this sort of thing. However, I would sincerely hope it is their desire to pass on this saving to their constituents.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Was there ever any request made or agreement or understanding reached in a federal-provincial conference between the provinces and the government of Canada that the provinces would reduce any premiums in this regard?

**Mr. Benson:** No, but we believe the provincial authorities will be honest and decent toward their own electors.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I simply want an answer to my question. I take it the answer is no. I have a further supplementary question. Is it the policy of the government of Canada to direct the provinces as to how they should or should not raise their revenues?

**Mr. Benson:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman obviously knows the answer to that question. The raising of revenues within a province is the responsibility of the province. However, we trust that in the case of medicare, when so much has been said about how much it is going to cost the people of Canada,