

Motions for Papers

page 8918 of *Hansard*. At that time the Acting Minister of Finance, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, informed the house that a study was being undertaken by the department in order to answer a large number of questions that had been placed on the order paper. In the course of his remarks he stated:

Mr. Speaker, the question is extremely complicated, and perhaps it would assist the house if I mentioned, for example, that one has to distribute sales tax collected at factories throughout all parts of the country. It would not be fair to say that all the sales tax collected at the factory in province A was paid by the consumers in province A; nor, for the same reason, would customs duties collected, for example, in the port of Montreal be properly attributed as revenues attributable to the province of Quebec, because those customs duties of course are paid by all Canadian consumers of those goods which pass through the port of Montreal. This is the nature of the problem; it is extremely complicated. The Minister of Finance has not seen any figures that have taken into account this redistribution of revenues collected at particular points.

At that time the Acting Minister of Finance indicated that every effort was being made to answer these questions on the order paper. I invite the attention of the hon. member for Lapointe to the fact that only yesterday we tabled an answer to question No. 1,755; a very extensive answer to a very pressing question, which answer covered a large part of the information being sought by the hon. member for Lapointe.

I want to assure the hon. member that I am not indifferent or inconsiderate to his desire to obtain information on this very important and interesting subject to all Canadians. Yesterday I invited the hon. member to put his question on the order paper and said we would make every endeavour to deal with it expeditiously. Apparently the hon. member for Lapointe is not interested in asking specific questions and prefers to rely on figures, as he said today, that he has given in *Hansard* and which have been demonstrated to be inadequate, and therefore misleading. As a responsible member of the house I can only assume that the hon. member for Lapointe accepts responsibility for relying on those inadequate figures. But, Mr. Speaker, I would go back—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance claims that on several occasions he had asked me to put questions on the order paper in that connection. I must point out that the first time he mentioned that to me was yesterday, and he did so at a time

when notices of motions for production of papers were already in the hands of the order paper editors and accepted for consideration today.

He should not say that he suggested several times that I put questions on the order paper.

I might add that replies to questions put on the order paper are always very vague. I know, because I asked some before.

The answers are very vague and inexplicit. We get only what the minister is willing to let us have. So, today, I am not asking for the same thing. I am asking for a report that actually exists, because the Minister of Finance himself stated, last August 7, that his department was attempting a distribution of revenue and expenditures by provinces and had been at it for the last several months—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think there is a real point of order. The hon. member disagrees with the parliamentary secretary who has the floor at the present time. It might be a good idea to let him finish, after which the hon. member for Lapointe, if he feels he has been incorrectly quoted, would have the right, according to our standing orders, to take part in the debate once again, or later on, to clear things up.

[*Text*]

Mr. Pennell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think, in justice to the hon. member for Lapointe, I should correct myself in saying that on several occasions I had asked him to place his question on the order paper. The hon. member is quite right; I did that on one occasion only, yesterday. I stand corrected on that point, Mr. Speaker, and would so indicate to the hon. member. To come back again to this question of the report, I think we are here dealing with a difference in words and perhaps it is an honest misunderstanding between the hon. member for Lapointe and myself and other members of the department.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would allow one question perhaps we could settle this matter. Does such a report exist now?

Mr. Pennell: Mr. Speaker, I can answer that question best by saying that as questions have arisen and have been placed on the order paper, the officials of the department have compiled information passed along on memoranda, which was necessary to deal with the large number of questions, the whole school of questions, of a particularly extensive nature; and naturally, more and more information is building up as we keep answering these questions.