

Inquiries of the Ministry

trying to ask for some time but the minister has been busy with other problems.

In view of the postponement of the legislation and commitments made in the house, and also in view of the great consternation of the maritime shippers about the matter, since the minister will not be here tomorrow can he say before the Easter recess whether there will be any increase in rates, or is there a definite commitment from the railways that the rates will not be increased?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I understand that, on the basis of discussions we had with the railways as soon as the bill was introduced, as an act of good faith on our part, they agreed not to increase their rates pending passage of the bill.

Mr. Bell: May I just be sure of that, Mr. Speaker, because the minister may have mixed the question up, though of course not intentionally. Until the legislation dealing with this question comes in and is passed, the railways have categorically promised not to increase these rates on which there is presently a freeze?

Mr. Hellyer: That is my understanding. There is no reason for hesitation on my part except that, as my hon. member friend knows, it is impossible to be categorical about all things. But it is my understanding that there will be no increase on the basis that the bill will be passed.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that this matter is dealt with in the fifth report of the transport committee and I understand that concurrence in the report will be moved tomorrow, will the minister obtain an assurance from the government house leader that the house will, in fact, concur in this report tomorrow?

AIRPORTS**MONTREAL—REFERENCE OF EARLY DISCLOSURE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the President of the Privy Council, in his capacity as government house leader, arising out of the discussion this afternoon on the question of privilege of the hon. member for Calgary North and some of the answers given this evening. In view of the fact that members of

[Mr. Bell.]

the house are concerned about the early disclosure of the choice of the site of the airport, would the President of the Privy Council give consideration to referring the matter of the early disclosure the way it was done, and the reasons for which it was done, to the standing committee on transport so that committee can study it and make a report to the house on the propriety or advantages, or the impropriety or disadvantages, of what was done?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me abundantly clear that there was no impropriety of any kind, and that no advantage would be gained from continuing this discussion. If the hon. member is seriously interested in the question he should encourage his colleagues on the transport committee, who at the moment are considering the estimates of the department, of transport to discuss the matter further in the committee.

Mr. Lewis: A supplementary question. Surely, the President of the Privy Council is aware that even I knew of that possibility. What I am asking him is whether he agrees to a house order referring the matter to the transport committee so that the transport committee would then discuss it, instead of having an argument about whether or not the committee should do something about it.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): If the hon. member knew about that possibility he would not have asked the second question. The estimates of the Department of Transport are before the committee and the building of airports in Montreal is one of the subjects that can be discussed.

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION**POLICY ON PRETAPING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I should like to ask the President of the Privy Council whether it is now government policy to pre-tape all government decisions in the manner this decision was?

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Woolliams: Just because government backbenchers yell "order"—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member appreciates that this is a rather new assignment for me, but my understanding is that a question of that nature can be