

ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY AUTHORITY—CARGO

Question No. 5,522—**Mr. Forrestall:**

In the best estimate of the government, would any cargo be diverted from the St. Lawrence Seaway if rates were increased to \$1.65 per ton of bulk cargo and to \$3.70 per ton of general cargo and, if so (a) what commodities would be diverted (b) in what quantity (c) to what modes and to what routings?

Mr. Ralph E. Goodale (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): The St. Lawrence Seaway Authority advises as follows: Some cargo would be diverted from the St. Lawrence Seaway if the present tolls on the Montreal-Lake Ontario section were increased to \$1.65 per ton bulk and \$3.70 per ton general. Given the many variables that affect this traffic, it is not feasible to predict the commodities or the alternative routings that would be involved. There are, however, indications that such a toll increase would have adverse effects upon the low value bulk products which comprise some 90 per cent of Seaway traffic. A considerable amount of Quebec-Labrador iron ore could be diverted to U.S. East Coast ports and thence by unit train to the interior or, alternatively, to overseas markets. This ore presently provides a backhaul for grain moving eastward. If much of the ore traffic is diverted, the lack of a backhaul would affect substantially the cost advantage currently enjoyed by Seaway grain movements.

Mr. Blais: I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Cossitt: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I draw the attention of the parliamentary secretary to question No. 5,141 which was placed on the order paper on March 31. That question asks for details concerning the fact that operators of Bell Canada, under instructions from the Department of Communications, listen in at intervals of approximately 40 to 45 seconds to telephone calls made by members of parliament in incoming government Watts lines. My question also asks for the reason this is done, why these instructions were issued, who issued them, and for a guarantee that this was not being done for the purposes that one might hope are not the reason, namely, to gather information for political purposes.

It seems to me that this is a simple and straightforward question, and it is one to which members of parliament are entitled to have an answer. The information is no secret. It is contained in the question. It is obtainable from any Bell operator operating for the government under communications. It is obtainable from supervisors on duty. I have obtained it from four supervisors and at least five operators.

I think it is about time that the members of this House had an answer to a question almost 2½ months old asking why operators of Bell Canada, paid by the government, are listening in on calls of members of parliament. This is a

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pretty serious business. They say that the equipment is outdated, that they have to listen in to see if we are still talking in order to disconnect the line. If the equipment is outdated, I suggest that it is time something is done about the equipment.

Certainly, we ought to be told these things, Mr. Speaker, since it is always a possibility that some listening-in would be done for political purposes, and this would go beyond all bounds of decency and what should be permitted in the House. I recall that at one point Your Honour said that this matter would be looked into, along with other points of order raised by my colleague sitting to my left and, I believe, by the hon. member for Yukon, and that subsequently a meeting would be held to reveal the results and the findings. As yet, I do not believe that meeting has taken place. If we cannot have some indication from the parliamentary secretary as to when the question will be answered, perhaps I can ask the Chair for some indication when the promised meeting will be held, so as to clarify the situation which seems to me to be quite out of order.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have had a question on the order paper since July 25, 1975, question No. 3,072, which is almost one year old. It asks several questions respecting the Post Office Department and their annual report concerning employees in the various categories. As I said, the question has been on the order paper since July 25 last, and I think it is absolutely ridiculous that this government has been unable to answer the question in almost a year. I think they had better get about their business and give answers to these questions.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed, from Thursday, June 3, consideration of the motion of Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Stevens (page 13901).

Mr. Paul Dick (Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, may I continue the remarks I started the other day, on June 3, as reported at page 14147 of *Hansard*, when I had to call it ten o'clock. At that time I was expressing concern that the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development had indicated that of 12 countries that appeared on a chart showing percentage expenditure of gross national product spent on research and development, Canada was tenth. I was trying to express some concern about the small amount of money that Canadians spend on research and development.

In order to show the concern that many people in this country have about this fact, may I just read an extract from a letter written to me by a constituent, a company that started a year and a half ago with four people, four