

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 11, 1969

The House met at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Third report of Standing Committee of Privileges and Elections, in both official languages—Mr. Laflamme.

Second report of Standing Committee of Transport and Communications—Mr. Lessard (LaSalle).

[Editor's Note: Text of foregoing reports appears in today's Votes and Proceedings.]

CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

TABLING OF CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in the two official languages, the conclusions of the third meeting of the Constitutional Conference which closed yesterday in Ottawa.

[English]

Mr. Baldwin: That is a lot of paper for so little accomplished.

Mr. Trudeau: There are many copies, so you can instruct yourself.

POST OFFICE

TABLING OF REPORT, "BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE, CANADA POST OFFICE"

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General and Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 41(2) I have the honour to present the report submitted by the Task Force, "Blueprint for Change, Canada Post Office", November 1969, in the two official languages.

Mr. Macquarrie: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the minister in tabling the report seemed to admit the priority of right of this House to receive this document first—an important

right. I read in this morning's paper a statement referring to the impending tabling of this document and it commented on its contents. I deplore this as a further deterioration of the rights of parliament and another advance toward mass news. Neither development is helpful to a stable or free democracy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps in fairness the minister might be allowed to reply. I have to mention to the hon. member that he can only raise a question of privilege in the way he has attempted to do by giving notice to the Chair.

Some hon. Members: No, no.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am referring to the fact. The hon. member is complaining that there was a comment in the newspapers. I, of course, do not know to which notice he is referring. If it is an incident which happened outside the House, the rules require him to give notice before the matter can be debated. However, as the matter has been raised I think the minister should be given an opportunity to reply.

Mr. Baldwin: Don't explain, just apologize.

Mr. Kierans: Mr. Speaker, for many weeks I have made it quite clear that we expected to table this report momentarily. We received it about five to six weeks ago. It is a lengthy document that took some time to translate. I may say on the specific point that I was as surprised as the hon. member for Hillsborough and, indeed, angry. Because I was occupied with other duties this morning I have not had a chance to investigate the source of the report in the *Globe and Mail*.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

INQUIRY AS TO ESTABLISHMENT OF HOUSE COMMITTEE

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I wish to ask the Prime Minister a question. In view of the almost imperceptible rate of progress at the conference during