

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Papineau: one question, please.

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TRANSPORT

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT PREPARED TO INSTRUCT RCMP TO CONDUCT INQUIRY INTO POSSIBLE SALE OF CN ROUTE

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of State for Transport and his Parliamentary Secretary, I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware that CN Route is to be sold to a private company for about \$23 million, although CN Route's real property is now estimated at between \$50 and \$70 million, and also that the sale of the company will put out of a job nearly 50 per cent of those who are now working for CN Route as permanent employees.

Is the Minister aware that CN has ordered a private investigation into certain allegations about the questionable aspects of this transaction? In the circumstances, is the Deputy Prime Minister prepared to ask the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to investigate?

● (1200)

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Transport I would rather take that question as notice. Since the Hon. Member has outlined what might be some very serious allegations I would rather reserve any comment at this time.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

U.S.S.R.—OBSERVANCE OF HELSINKI PACT

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs. Just four years after the Soviet Union signed the Helsinki Pact of 1975, the Communist army invaded Afghanistan and ruthlessly killed men, women, and children. It is still doing so. In recent trips to the UN and around the world has the Minister noticed any desire on the part of the Communists to live up to the Pact they signed in 1975 by withdrawing from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, et cetera?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): The answer to that, Mr. Speaker, is no, I have not noted any particular interest or willingness on the part of the Soviet Union to change policies which are traditional to them and which are in many cases repugnant to Canada. It may be that there is a change in their attitude with regard to some

Privilege—Mr. Riis

questions of human contact. There is certainly a change in their rhetoric. I think we would all do well to judge them on their actions, not by their words. We should also do everything we can to encourage them to follow their words with concrete action.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Speaker: I should like to bring to the attention of Members, with respect to Private Members' business, that I have received written notice from the Hon. Member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson) that due to a prior commitment he is unable to be present in the House on Monday, November 24, 1986 to move his motion during the hour for Private Members' business. Accordingly, I am directing the Table to drop that item of business to the bottom of the order of precedence. Since that notice will thereby be removed, the hour for Private Members' business will be extended and, pursuant to Standing Order 39(2), the House will continue with the business before it prior to that hour until the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

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PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF LEGISLATIVE CONTENT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I indicated earlier in writing that I intended to rise today on a question of privilege regarding a very serious breach of the rights and privileges of this House. I would like to refer first to Citation 16 of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition where it describes the privileges of the House as the rights which are:

—"absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers".

On Tuesday last the CBC program *The Journal* aired an interview with a Mr. C. J. Stettler, a former president of the U.S. Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association. In that interview, taped some time before the tabling of Bill C-22, the drug patent Bill, Mr. Stettler indicated that he knew of specific changes made in the Bill since its passage was denied last summer. Let me re-emphasize that point because it is very important. An American citizen had prior knowledge of what was in this important Bill before it was actually laid upon the Table and its contents made known to Members of this House. Citation 22 of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition states the following:

The power of the House to enforce its rules extends not only to Members and others admitted within the precincts of Parliament, but also to members of the general public who may interfere with the orderly conduct of parliamentary business.

Clearly this particular citizen of the United States had prior knowledge of this Bill. That constitutes an interference with