

*Railways Freight Rates*

There can be no doubt that if there is any rule which is fundamental to the operation of a parliamentary system of government, it is the rule which pertains to the examination of, voting on and approval of government expenditures. Perhaps hon. members will have notices that it is inherent in what has been said in support of the grievance—I use the word “grievance” as opposed to “question of privilege” advisedly—that what has been done is, in fact, in conformity with the Standing Orders of the House. On the other hand, in conforming with the Standing Orders of the House the procedure has worked a hardship or difficulty on members in their necessity to fulfil their proper duties by examining these estimates very carefully.

Therefore, I have to find that because the Standing Orders of the House have been obeyed, there is not a prima facie question of privilege. However, whenever the Standing Orders work a hardship on members who want to do their duty diligently, it is very comforting to have the assurance of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) that in the examination of the procedures of the House this very important grievance ought to be, and will be, taken into account.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

## PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

First report of Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections—Mr. Blaker.

[Editor's Note: For text of the above Report see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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## HOUSE OF COMMONS

## TABLING OF GREEN PAPER “MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST”

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to table copies of the green paper entitled “Members of Parliament and Conflict of Interest”. This was tabled in the last parliament, but I understand it must be tabled again in order that I may refer it, as I intend to do shortly, to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs for examination and report.

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## TRANSPORT

## EXPIRATION OF FREEZE ON RAILWAY FREIGHT RATES—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise, under the provisions of Standing Order 43, on a matter of rather urgent and pressing necessity, namely the question of the expiration of the freeze on railway freight rates to take effect at the end of this year. Because of the

[Mr. Speaker.]

refusal of the railways to respond to the request of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) for full disclosure of their costs to justify their present freight rates and their proposed 25 per cent increase effective January 1, and since the minister has threatened since July, 1973, to bring in legislation to force such disclosure, claims he has legislation ready and has asked for the co-operation of the House for speedy passage of such legislation, I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom):

That this House requests the minister to immediately present his legislation for first reading, and further that this House agrees to co-operate to effect speedy passage of such legislation.

● (1420)

**Mr. Speaker:** Before putting the question I should tell the hon. member and the House that I have some grave reservations about the validity of the motion in that it seeks to anticipate an order of the day and, in addition, in the latter part it anticipates speedy passage by the House which is a term I submit which, even if the motion were adopted by this House, would be impossible to define with any degree of accuracy. However, the motion as put forward refers to a matter of some pressing necessity and urgency; therefore, I shall resolve the doubt in favour of the hon. member. Does the House give unanimous consent that the motion to be proposed under the provisions of Standing Order 43 be debated at this time?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

**Mr. Speaker:** There is not unanimous consent. The motion may not be put.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would point out that yesterday the Minister of Transport requested the co-operation of the House to the speedy passage of legislation and it was government members who said no to the motion.

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## HOUSE OF COMMONS

## ALLEGED INCREASE IN STAFF AND POWERS OF PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

**Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to move a motion under the provisions of Standing Order 43 on a matter of particularly urgent and pressing necessity because of press reports today that the Prime Minister's office will exercise an even larger role in controlling the government of this country with presumably a further decrease of the power of Parliament. I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Stewart):

That it is the opinion of the House that further expansion of the power of the Prime Minister's office is not in keeping with the democratic process or the rights of Parliament and that the House requests the Prime Minister to make a statement on the changes that have been made, or that are contemplated, in the staff and duties of his office and in particular an explanation of the duties, salaries and job designations of Michael Kirby, former principal assistant to Premier Gerald Regan,