

In terms of its applicability under the rule at the moment, the nature of this matter is unclear, and in that sense is similar to some other urgent matters, particularly work stoppages which have been addressed to the Chair pursuant to the terms of this Standing Order in the past. That is to say that at the moment it is difficult for me to decide if inherent in the nature of the complaint of the Auditor General and the situation to which the Auditor General has alluded, as referred to in these two motions, there is a difficulty which is so imminent as to require a special session of the House of Commons.

The fact is that it is my inclination at this time to decide in the negative, but that is not an indication that the decision will always remain so because, indeed, the matter is certainly going to be discussed and considered at some length; and that is another part of the decision I have to make. In other words, what I am saying with respect to the inherent nature of the matter is that I have the view at the present time that it is not self-evident that this urgent matter is so imminent that we ought to set aside special hours to debate it tonight. That aspect of the matter may become clearer in the days which follow. Therefore, I do not preclude another application if, in fact, evidence leads us to believe that the matter referred to by the Auditor General is in fact so imminent a difficulty that we ought to set aside some time and debate it at once.

However, I am more concerned about the second aspect of the consideration under these applications, and that is the language in this particular Standing Order, which is as follows:

In determining whether a matter should have urgent consideration, Mr. Speaker shall have regard to the extent to which it concerns the administrative responsibilities of the government or could come within the scope of ministerial action and he also—

These are the important words:

—shall have regard to the probability of the matter being brought before the House within reasonable time by other means.

It is certainly quite obvious that the matter was brought before the House by some other means today, and undoubtedly it is not going to stop being brought before the House for a short while in that way; but I do not want to suggest for one second that that is a satisfactory way to deal with a subject of this importance and of this amplitude. However, the fact of the matter is that it is also well known—and by order of this House only a day or two ago—that the subject was referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and that opportunity for discussion of this subject will certainly be extensive and in many ways, at least initially, ought to be more meaningful than the kind of debate which takes place in this House. That discussion before the committee ought to be with the minister and his officials and the Auditor General and his officials, and it ought to provide the most excellent forum for the discussion of the difficulties referred to by the Auditor General. If that is not the case, the nature of the matter may be such that another application might be considered by the Chair at a future time.

There is, of course, the suggestion that there remain some opposition days, and while that is not a suggestion I like to

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come back to frequently, this particular subject is certainly one which, while others cannot be said to lend themselves very conveniently to discussion on opposition days, it would be very difficult to put in that category, and therefore I would have to consider that as a possibility.

However, my major reason for rejecting this application under Standing Order 26 at this moment is based on the opportunity which now exists in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and unless that proves valueless I feel that should be an excellent opportunity. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 26 (5) I feel that I ought not to grant the applications made by both hon. members under the Standing Order.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES RESTRAINT ACT

AMENDMENT TO REMOVE CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS RESPECTING TRAINING ALLOWANCE RATES

The House resumed, from Monday, November 22, consideration of the motion of Mr. Andras that Bill C-19, to amend or repeal certain statutes to enable restraint of government expenditures, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.

● (1550)

**Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask your leave and the consent of the House to permit me to defer to one of the all-time great parliamentarians, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker). I ask this because I took only about a minute last night when I called it ten o'clock. In an attempt to persuade hon. members opposite to agree, I should like to remind them of a remark made by Mr. Jack Pickersgill, a former cabinet minister and head of the CTC, when he referred to those who put themselves in the position of speaking ahead of the right hon. member for Prince Albert. He said it was like unto a banjo player warming up before the Boston Philharmonic.

**Mr. Speaker:** With the permission of the House, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker).

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his very generous words, and Your Honour and the House for giving me the privilege of speaking at this time. I have not been around here as much as I should have liked in the last two or three weeks, but now circumstances are such that I can and will be here.

I was very much interested in the discussion that took place here this afternoon about parliament, the House and the people. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), by virtue of his position, naturally possesses abundant power to assure that the