

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

arrangements have been made to have the annual report of the Post Office Department referred to the transport and communications committee.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Mr. Speaker, the question was much discussed and it was suggested that that subject matter, along with three others which I had proposed to hon. gentlemen opposite as being appropriate matters for reference, could be referred to the committee. I am still waiting to hear from hon. members opposite in this regard. I am not sure exactly what the situation of that reference would be in relation to the terms of reference of the privileges and elections committee, but I will be glad to discuss it.

### CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

#### INQUIRY AS TO STATUS OF DISPUTE WITH TECHNICIANS

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, you will recall that just prior to the time we got into the hassle about strangers in the gallery, you recognized me. In view of the fact that I have an urgent question, I wonder whether you would allow me to put this question at this time, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** There is no objection whatsoever from the Chair.

**Mr. Alexander:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Secretary of State. It is an urgent one, and I believe he has notice of it. I wish to ask him if an agreement has been reached between the negotiators for the C.B.C. and the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians, thereby averting a nation-wide shutdown of television and radio services.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, this question was asked and my colleague, the Minister of Labour, answered it a few minutes ago. I have nothing to add.

• (3:30 p.m.)

[*English*]

### PROCEDURE

#### MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE IN FOURTH REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The house resumed, from Wednesday, December 11, consideration of the motion of Mr. Blair that the fourth report of the special committee on procedure of the house, presented to the house on Friday, December 6,

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

1968, be concurred in, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Stanfield (p. 3762).

**Mr. Steven Otto (York East):** At five o'clock yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I was dealing with the new orders as they relate to the work load of committees. I pointed out, and I point out again, that no one can deny that under the present rules estimates have never been given serious scrutiny. In the consideration of estimates members could refer to anything under the sun, and they did. The estimates were passed, and the only objection a member on the government side could take was by voting against an estimate, which would amount to a vote of confidence.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has said that the purpose of the new rules is to have the estimates scrutinized in committees so that this can be done without a vote of confidence being involved. It is true that party pressure will be brought to bear and discipline will be applied in order to make sure that hon. members on this side will pass the estimates in accordance with the wishes of the ministers. However, if a matter is sufficiently serious and if enough members in a committee decide to oppose it, under the new rules they can, with the co-operation of the opposition, reduce an estimate and thereby embarrass the ministers. In this way members can make their power felt. In this respect I should like to bring to the attention of the house the new standing order 65(4)(b) which reads as follows:

Changes in the membership of any standing, joint or special committee may be effected by a notification thereof, signed by the member acting as the chief government whip, being filed with the Clerk of the house who shall cause the same to be printed in the *Votes and Proceedings* of the house of that sitting, or of the next sitting thereafter, as the case may be.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, we have now introduced into the rules not only the idea that there is an opposition side but that there is a government side. Formerly, we were all hon. gentlemen. I think it is about time we did this. In addition, we have introduced into the rules certain rights for the opposition to bring up certain estimates or reports as they see fit. This particular rule introduces something else, and that is party discipline. In effect, what it does is this: it says to the government whip, do not worry about members who may cause you some annoyance in a committee because all you have to do is file a notice of change, take him off that committee and put on somebody else who is more co-operative. This applies to the