

ation, they decide should not be pursued, the House should be so informed.

I am simply saying that this is a matter which I take seriously and which I consider to be of great importance. I want to put it into the hands of the House to decide whether or not this matter should be deferred until Monday to give members on both sides an opportunity to prepare their interventions, so that I could reach a decision on Monday on both questions at the same time. But I do consider it to be a matter which, even if it is not a question of privilege, is a practice that be done only after careful reflection and a defence here in the House, after which I would want to decide whether or not it was privilege. Perhaps I could get some indication from the House whether we want to proceed with this now or whether we should defer it until Monday for further argument.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to you that the Minister of Transport is in the House. He is aware of this question because he knows of my concern. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is not here, he is in the other place, so I suggest we start dealing with this matter this morning. It is a very important question.

You ask whether or not public funds have been spent. What I was quoting from was an answer provided to me by the Government of Canada. It appears at page 2044 of *Hansard* in reply to a question I put on the order paper. So indeed the government is saying it did spend funds. The Minister of Transport is nodding his head in the affirmative, so we know that that is a fact. I think we should pursue it.

Hon. Walter Baker (President of Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, you have raised a very important point on a matter which we regard as being of some significance, and I think it is important from the point of view of parliamentary practice. I understand there is one almost related matter that was put over until Monday involving the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise), and there is the matter which was raised today concerning the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski).

With respect to the importance of engaging the attention of members of Parliament generally with respect to public policy, I think your suggestion is an eminently sensible one, and if it is agreeable to you—and I hope it will be agreeable to members of the House—we can give attention to it in the period of time and deal with the matter on Monday because we regard it as being quite an important matter as well. I hope you will use what authority you have in these circumstances to breathe some life into that suggestion because I think the argument is very important in terms of parliamentary practice.

● (1240)

Mr. Speaker: I suppose we can accomplish both things. There are some hon. members who want to make interventions today. I can hear them, then I can defer the matter, which I will most certainly do, for interventions from the government side on Monday, or I can hear the minister today. The Minister of Transport might be able to shed some light on this.

Privilege—Mr. Nystrom

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I will not be in the House on Monday. I would be prepared to make a few comments right at this particular time.

Perhaps I can clarify a couple of items raised by the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom). He questioned whether there was an order in council. I think he will find that there was. The member suggested that it is a political report to be used for partisan purposes. Upon reflection I think he would want to reconsider those remarks, because quite frankly the report clearly speaks for itself. There is nothing partisan or political about the report.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if I could deal with that point now. It seems to me that is a point which we could conveniently leave out of the argument. It does not matter. The quality of the report makes absolutely no difference to the end result. Whether in fact it is of a partisan nature or not, it does not make any difference if it is a report of a one-caucus committee. I think we can keep the matter on a rather higher plane. Regardless of the nature or the quality of the report, it seems to me that has nothing to do with the ultimate decision.

I would invite members on my left to abandon those accusations and members on my right to abandon those defences and just to stick with the basic problem of whether or not it is within the practices or contrary to the privileges and practices of the House to spend government funds on the report of a government committee only.

Mr. Mazankowski: Only Mr. Speaker would be able to decide that question. I am sure that in Your Honour's wisdom you will decide in a manner which is consistent with the traditions of this House.

I am sure the hon. member will find that the order in council was made. The report has been made public. There were members of the government party involved in the formation and the establishment of this report. I think upon reflection there have been a number of reports which have been considered with respect to grain transportation and movement. I think the Booze-Allan study was worth some \$600,000. It was done by a consulting firm that was appointed by the former government. We have here a very comprehensive analysis and some very good recommendations which are not limited to the consumption of the government or the members of a political party.

I presented this report to a committee of the House yesterday for the benefit not only of the government or Conservative members of the House, but in the interests of achieving a better grain handling and transportation system. The cost was \$9,161. We have been completely open about it. There were some 30 groups and associations consulted. Discussions had gone on. The report is public. It is in the hands of Parliament. Quite frankly, I think it is designed for and aimed at facilitating grain movement. We have indicated what costs were associated from the public treasury. So there is absolutely nothing to hide. If, in Mr. Speaker's candid opinion, there is a