

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Friday, December 11, 1953

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

### PRIVILEGE

MR. WEAVER—STATEMENT WITH RESPECT TO  
DISSEMINATED ORE

**Mr. G. D. Weaver (Churchill):** On a point of personal privilege, the other day the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Nicholson) made a statement to which I took exception, having in mind certain professional information of which I was aware. In reply to my observations at a later stage, he referred to a statement he had obtained from the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, a copy of which I have since obtained. My point of privilege is that in my humble opinion he referred inadequately to this statement, and I feel that in fairness to the house and myself the statement should be put on *Hansard* in full.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it agreed by the house that the statement of the hon. gentleman should be put on *Hansard*?

**Mr. Knowles:** Would it not be better to make it as an appendix, rather than including a document such as that in the pages of *Hansard*?

**Mr. Speaker:** The document consists of about three and a half pages; the first page is not full.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the wish of the house that this statement be inserted in *Hansard* following the remarks of the hon. gentleman?

**Hon. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I think Your Honour should make a considered decision in regard to this. There has been a great deal of comment in this house from time to time about the rule, which is very clearly established, against reading speeches. There are exceptions which I think should be borne in mind also; namely, in the case of the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) and the Leader of the Opposition. After all, we have traditions which are of some importance, and I am referring to long-established traditions.

For reasons that must be obvious to everyone, there are occasions on which it is

appropriate and very wise that a statement by the Prime Minister, for example, or statements by other members of the cabinet, such as the budget of the Minister of Finance, should be read, where they constitute an expression of government policy involving details that ought to be fully presented in prepared form. This can be done without any suggestion that it is a breach of the rules.

Our parliamentary traditions make it equally appropriate for the leader of the opposition, in any of our parliaments which conduct their affairs under the same historic rules, to read any statement where a basic exchange of ideas is called for. There has been objection, however, to the extending practice of reading prepared speeches.

This rule has been observed more by its breach than by its recognition. No tendency has been shown by hon. members on either side to curtail the use of fairly extensive notes. On the other hand, the danger that has been expressed in this house on earlier occasions is that if this should be extended too far a practice might be adopted which is not consistent with our parliamentary procedure, though consistent with a perfectly proper practice under another type of procedure in the congress of the United States, where there is a rule permitting the filing of statements.

I do not think it is proper for us to criticize in any way a practice that exists under another jurisdiction. We all realize, however, that they are two different systems and we should be very careful in this house not to take any step that would suggest by inference the acceptance of the proposition that statements may be put on record as a substitute for the statement of the member himself, who is expected to express his own opinion in regard to anything that has been said at this time or on an earlier occasion.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Leader of the Opposition is quite right when he says that speeches should not be read in the house. If there was some leniency shown it was on the throne speech debate, and I am quite prepared to show some leniency again when the budget debate comes up. But as a rule speeches should not be read in the house because members are supposed to express their own opinion and not read from long