

Postal Services Continuation Act, 1987

Mr. Andre: Rather than get involved in this, perhaps the Chair will not allow—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): On the same point of order, the Hon. Member for Comox—Powell River.

Mr. Skelly: Contrary to the statement of the Chair, in my hearing, the Minister did not state that he was prepared to table the document. The Minister stated that he was prepared to give it to the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps). In order that other Members of the House may have access to the same information, which the Minister purports to be true, I would certainly wish to see the documents, and ask that the Chair request that the Minister table those documents.

Mr. Andre: If I may be permitted to finish my remarks, which I can do quickly, without further interruption from the Opposition, then I will deal with the matter in question.

The purpose of reading this list of incidents and bringing them to the attention of the House is to make Members aware that there are activities which are posing a serious danger—

Ms. Copps: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am pursuing the point of order because I do not believe it is the decision of the Minister whether or not he chooses to table the document. The Standing Orders specifically require that if there is a document from which he quotes at great length then he must table the document. It is part of the Standing Orders. I believe the Chair is aware of the Standing Order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I do understand and know of the Standing Order to which the Hon. Member for Hamilton East is referring. The Hon. Minister first stated that he was prepared to give his notes, the document, to the Hon. Member. At first the Chair understood that it was an official document. The Hon. Minister has now put the point in a very succinct fashion by stating that they are notes which were prepared for him in order to address the House this morning. A Minister does not have to table personal notes. It will be his decision whether or not to give the Hon. Member a copy of his notes. The Chair cannot make a ruling on this.

I hope that this is the end of this point of order.

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Speaker, I would just like to draw the attention of the House to Beauchesne's Fifth Edition, page 138. In Citation 390 there is a long list of criteria enumerated that are to be applied when determining if government papers or documents should be produced.

I wish to ask the Chair to refer to all the citations in Beauchesne, not only 390, which pertain to the long established practice that, where a Minister reads from a document, as the Minister has done, all Members of the House, not only the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps), should be given the benefit of that list in order that they can refer to the accuracy of the statements that have been made, and also have the privilege of using those examples to perhaps argue with the Minister in debate of the House.

Mr. Skelly: I rise on the same point of order, Madam Speaker. The question was raised that the Minister stated he was reading from his notes and not from a document. The Minister did mention that he was quoting from the daily occurrence report. I am sure the ears of every Member in the House picked up when the Minister stated that. The document the Minister referred to ought to be tabled in the House; not given informally to one Member but given to every Member of the House.

Mr. Andre: I believe the Hon. Members have simply rehashed a point upon which you have already ruled, Madam Speaker, so there is no need to go any further.

The point I am trying to make which the Opposition does not wish me to make—

Ms. Copps: Is there a ruling?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Chair at this point is referring to Citation 327 where it states:

327.(1) A Minister of the Crown is not at liberty to read or quote from a despatch or other state paper not before the House—

From my understanding of what the Minister has stated, what he is quoting from is not a despatch or a state paper. Henceforth, I see no obligation for the Minister to table the document.

On the other hand, I would ask that the Minister consider making it available to the Hon. Member, as the Minister has stated he would.

This point of order has now been ruled upon, and I will not accept any other intervention on it.

Mr. Skelly: Madam Speaker, I rise on a further point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it a separate point of order?

Mr. Skelly: It is a separate point of order.

I made notes on the Minister's statement. The notes indicate that the Minister used the term "a daily occurrence sheet".

● (1200)

It has been fairly clear that we do not have a daily occurrence sheet from which he was quoting. He must have been quoting from some other more informal source, and I think the Minister ought to correct the record rather than smear postal workers.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member assured the Chair that this was a different point of order. Obviously it is not, and this point has been ruled upon. The Minister has the floor.

Mr. Andre: Madam Speaker, the point I am trying to make, which the Opposition does not want me to make, is that we