

Capital Punishment

by a fellow inmate in a penitentiary, for example. Am I correct in my understanding?

Mr. Reynolds: It was not written by a fellow inmate, Mr. Speaker, but by somebody who works for the parole service. I think it important that I should read the letter and get my message across that the rehabilitation facilities in prisons are not doing their job.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Would the hon. member be prepared to name the person who wrote the letter?

Mr. Reynolds: No, Mr. Speaker. I think I could get it later, but at the moment I do not have the name of the person who wrote the letter.

An hon. Member: Carry on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Really, I think I should hear further argument on this point. My feeling is that under the rules which govern us, and which have governed us in the past, I should ask the hon. member not to read the letter. However, I am prepared to hear argument. I gather the hon. member for Yukon wishes to assist the Chair to reach what I regard as an important decision.

Mr. Nielsen: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It is the practice of the House for members to be permitted to read such correspondence into the record when the hon. member himself, and no one else, takes responsibility for what he is reading. Quite apart from that, the letter deals with an individual whose background and activities are notorious. They are public knowledge. Individuals have been named over and over again in this Chamber, and correspondence related to them cited without the names of the authors having to be read into the record. I submit it is not in accordance with our practice to insist that this be done. Even if that were not so, the subject matter with which the hon. member is dealing in this debate is a person by the name of Head, whose character, reputation and activities, both past and current, are notorious throughout the length and breadth of this country.

• (1640)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre on the point of order.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Just a brief word, Mr. Speaker. May I begin by agreeing with the statement made by the hon. member for Yukon that it has been the practice of this House for a member to be permitted to read a letter without giving the name of the author if he is prepared to make the ideas in the letter his own.

Mr. Nielsen: That is what I said.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): But at that point I am afraid I must part company with the hon. member for Yukon. It is not simply a case of taking responsibility; he must give the ideas as his own. It seems to me that the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta is trying to give the House the contents of a letter that has come from outside the House without giving the name of the author. In fact, he admitted that he does not have the name before him at the present time. Therefore, I think the hon. member is perfectly free in argument to say that

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

certain ideas have been presented to him with which he concurs; but to read the letter so it goes into *Hansard* in fine print as though it were a piece of evidence from the outside would not, I think, be appropriate in this case.

Mr. Nielsen: If I might add to that—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Yukon has already spoken on the point of order. Are there any other contributions to the point of order?

Mr. Nielsen: A question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Yukon on a question of privilege.

Mr. Nielsen: I just want to point out to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, through you, Sir, that what I said was that an hon. member who reads such correspondence into the record must take responsibility for doing so. I meant precisely the interpretation that was put upon it by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, namely that the hon. member adopt the ideas as his own.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a question of privilege and the hon. member really should not have raised it as a question of privilege. Are there any other hon. members who would like to make a contribution to the point of order?

Mr. Bell: Mr. Speaker, in order to get around a little bit of difficulty here, I understand that the hon. member has quoted from a letter which, as a matter of fact, has some very great significance. It is apparent that, for various reasons, the latter part of the letter is not available. I suggest the best way out of the difficulty is this. It is too late for the hon. member to paraphrase it, as he could have in the first instance, so I suggest he simply adopt the thoughts as his own in some way that might be akin to paraphrasing, which would get us out of the hole. The letter as such does not have to go into the record.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank hon. members for their contributions. Whether the person referred to in the letter has a reputation of the utmost notoriety or has no reputation whatsoever which would interest anybody, the fact is that the Chair cannot, of course, make a ruling on that ground. I think it is the duty of the Chair and the responsibility of all hon. members to see that people are treated within the proper limits.

I would ask the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta if he is prepared, as suggested by the hon. member for Yukon, the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, to paraphrase what is in the document and make the comments his own responsibility in regard to what somebody felt about this particular person. This would be permitted by the Chair, but this is the responsibility that now rests on the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta. That is the ruling of the Chair.

Mr. Reynolds: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that I have not quoted anything from the letter as yet. If I may repeat my previous comments, I was talking about the same Charles Head who, on four different occasions,