

*Speaker's Ruling***POINT OF ORDER**

REQUEST FOR TABLING OF DOCUMENT

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask a point of clarification. It is because somebody on the other side said that I was wrong. When the member asked for the tabling of the document that had been read, it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, you said that it should be exchanged with the member. I do not know why it would not be tabled and then be here for everybody to see.

My second point is that there should be some explanation as to why a document was brought into the House so that the minister could depose it in the House. I was here. I watched that. I understand the rule is that if anybody is reading from a document, then it is fair game and should be placed before the House. That is something that goes back for many, many years. Maybe that is something that has changed.

In this case what we had was the Minister of Veterans Affairs read a letter. We had another member who asked that the document be tabled. At the same time we had to wait for someone to bring him in some paper which he then tabled.

Mr. Lewis: He was out.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): I am saying that he was sitting there when someone brought in the paper to him, whatever it was. That implies, for whatever reason, that he was not ready to table the document in the House.

• (1520)

I am just saying that there are two points here. It is very important we not forget that when you are reading from a piece of paper, that is the paper the person should be tabling in the House.

Maybe I misunderstood, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me you said to exchange it with the other member. I think it should be tabled.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister was out of the House. Often ministers will quote either from an excerpt from an official document, which has been placed in their briefing notes, or from the entire document. I happen to think that in this case the minister actually had the entire letter.

I know that ministers leave the House and discuss matters with their aids. He came back in an effort to clear up the situation.

There is no question that the government has on record support from the War Amputations of Canada and from the Legion support for the government's programs. We would be glad to put that on the record. Having heard this exchange, I am sure that the minister will be able to put on the record and table in the House exactly the documents he used that are official.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for South West Nova has raised a point with respect to documents that are referred to by a minister in answering questions or members. The rule is as she quotes it. In such a case the minister ought to table the document and certainly will have to if called upon to do so.

I may inadvertently have said something that led to some confusion. Without in any way denigrating the content of the minister's reply or the seriousness of the question and the answer, I felt that the minister had gone on too long. I interrupted him and said: "Perhaps that is enough. If you want the hon. member who asked the question to see the letter, then perhaps you can send it across the aisle," or words to that effect.

That may be where the difficulty arose. I have to say that I interrupted the hon. minister because I thought the hon. minister was going on too long.

Immediately afterward I think the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan rose, and I think I am correct, and asked if the minister would table the letter. I said that was appropriate and the minister did.

The point the hon. member makes is correct. The practice has always been that if letters or documents are read then those should be tabled.

I think I may have contributed to the confusion. I was only attempting to move things on so that more members would be heard.

I thank the hon. member.

MAIN ESTIMATES

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with regard to the Estimates that were tabled this morning.