

*Oral Questions*

finished about this time, although I have not seen it. Work has been going on in relation to the various facilities on the assumption that the report would be adequately favourable to them, so there will be little delay in proceeding.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Hamilton West on a point of order.

**Mr. Alexander:** I would remind Your Honour that the leader of the New Democratic Party, in attacking the Prime Minister almost as vigorously as I did with respect to the unhealthy unemployment situation, referred to a letter which I believe was written by Premier Ed Schreyer, in answer, I believe, to a letter from the Prime Minister. This concerns a serious matter: whether the government is moving toward job creation in the fall, as I believe it is, because the same point was raised by Premier Schreyer in a press conference when he indicated that the Prime Minister had ignored his wishes with respect to the convening of a first ministers' conference, at which time the premier indicated that the government intended to introduce some form of job creation program in the fall.

It is my understanding—I am not an expert on the rules, and Your Honour will check me if I am wrong—that since the leader of the NDP had cited this letter, indicating it was written on June 22 by the premier, that if one quotes at length from a letter such as that, or from any document, as long as its publication would not offend the public interest such a letter or document should be tabled. As far as I can understand, as I look at the Prime Minister, who regards this as a big joke—

**Mr. Trudeau:** Have you got something there from Beauduchesne?

**Mr. Alexander:**—publication of this letter does not offend the public interest. All we are concerned with is whether the government has the wisdom or the brains to bring about some form of job creation plan in order to relieve those who are suffering from inability to find jobs because the government has failed to create a climate of confidence in which the private sector can play its full part in the economy. I can refer you to Beauduchesne, Mr. Speaker—I have in mind the intervention by the Prime Minister just now—and I have found on page 134 a sentence which will be of interest to the Prime Minister, who does not know everything all the time:

It has been admitted that a document which has been cited ought to be laid upon the table of the House if it can be done without injury to the public interest.

I shall be fair, Mr. Speaker, and I shall read the next sentence, because to be selective in my reading would be taking advantage of Your Honour:

The same rule, however, cannot be held to apply to private letters or memoranda.

My conclusion is that this is not a private letter. I do not know what the leader of the New Democratic Party has in his hands. He has an ability to be able to get information which others cannot, because Socialists are all alike—they always exchange information.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[Mr. Lang.]

**Mr. Alexander:** Perhaps that is how they get it. But in light of the serious situation we face, in light of the fact that the government's economic policies have brought the country to its knees, and given the fact that the Prime Minister may at long last have realized it is time for the government to get off its fanny and face its predicament by bringing in some form of job creation program, I believe it is incumbent upon the leader of the New Democratic Party to table whatever information he may have, for the benefit of all members of this House as well as the people of Canada.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The House ought to be clear about two things. First, that the requirement, according to our precedents, for the tabling of a letter which has been cited or quoted is one which is directed against the ministry for the reason, obviously, that if a minister takes part in a debate in the House and is able to cite documents to his or her advantage, it is only in accordance with fair play and justice that those documents ought to be available to all the participants in the debate. That rule operates against ministers but not against other members.

In the second place, the right to table documents in this House is not one which can be used by members other than ministers of the Crown. I would be prepared to listen to argument that if an advantage has been gained by a member of the House, as a result of making reference to documents, the member concerned ought to be compelled to table those documents, whether he is a minister of the Crown or not, in order to equalize the advantage among all members participating in the debate and so that the discussion could continue on a fair footing. However, the question period has never been equated with debate in terms of our precedents, and surely it ought not to be open to any member of the House simply to refer during the question period to some document and then, by that means, table a document by a procedure which would not otherwise be open to him. For these reasons, I am not able to extend the rule at this time.

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● (1510)

### PRIVILEGE

MR. BROADBENT—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND PREMIER OF MANITOBA

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege related to what the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) had to say and what I regard as a petty, peevish and insulting reference to Premier Schreyer of Manitoba—I say that most seriously—as well as to myself as a member of the House.

During the question period, the Prime Minister said, on the one hand, that the Premier of Manitoba was betraying a confidence in revealing correspondence between himself and the Prime Minister, and that I, in turn, was compounding this by informing the House of some information which was of a confidential nature. I resent that, and I insist that the Prime Minister review the case and offer, in particular, the Premier