

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This debate on the procedural point could go on for a long time. It seems to me the question is a very simple one, and I was prepared to rule on it a while ago.

I think the argument put forward by the hon. member for Calgary North is valid. The rule is clear enough. If a document is quoted in debate it has to be tabled. It was suggested by the President of the Privy Council that perhaps we are not dealing here with what is termed a state document. This has always been the difficulty in the past—to determine what is a public document and what is a private document. My thought is that if a letter, even though it might have been written originally as a private letter, becomes part of the records of a department it becomes at that point a public document and a state paper. It seems to me that the documents to which the minister has referred are part of the official penitentiary papers or are documents within the possession of the penitentiary officials of the department, and I would be inclined to think that any document of this kind which is cited in the way it was by the minister ought to be tabled in the House.

Again, in support of this ruling is the fact that if a member of the House proposed a motion for the production of these documents the documents would, in my view, have to be considered by the Chair as a type of document which ought to be tabled. I suggest that from a procedural standpoint the government cannot say that the document is a private document which ought not to be tabled. Of course, the government would not be obliged to table it at that point; there might be a debate on the subject. But when documents or letters are actually quoted in debate the rule applies clearly. I refer hon. members not only to citation 159 of Beauchesne's Fourth Edition but also to Erskine May, page 438 of the 17th edition, on which the citation is based.

In view of the long-established precedents referred to by both May and Beauchesne I have to rule that any document which is cited in this way and which can be considered to be a public document ought to be tabled.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, the originals are not in my possession, but I shall certainly, with leave of the House, table them sometime today. Anyhow, I was prepared to make them available to the hon. member, but I quite understand that he does not wish to rely merely on his own judgment.

[English]

Mr. Woolliams: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General must have become a little upset. I am sure he does not mean it when he says I do not want to look at the documents. That was the very purpose of my asking for them.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I might act as interpreter at this point and say that was not my understanding of what the minister said in French. Orders of the day.

Speech from the Throne

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed, from Monday, February 21, consideration of the motion of Mr. Ross Whicher for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Stanfield (p. 34).

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, as the other hon. members I listened carefully to the Speech from the Throne but before going directly to the heart of the matter I want to discuss this morning I would like to recall that when earlier I asked the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) a question about the premier of British Columbia who advocates payments to individuals of this country instead of equalization payments to the provinces, the premier of British Columbia was accused of being a bigot. Furthermore, the Prime Minister told me that the premier of British Columbia had stated that there were too many French Canadians in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, everyone knows perfectly that in 1961, for example, when the Social Credit convention was held in Ottawa the premier of British Columbia supported your humble servant who was then a French Canadian. To state that the premier of British Columbia is against French Canadians in Ottawa is to distort the facts somewhat.

• (1210)

There is another point I would like to bring to the attention of the House. In 1962, provincial elections were held in Quebec and during the election campaign, the Liberals of the Hon. Jean Lesage told whoever cared to listen, that British Columbia, under a Social Credit administration, was bankrupt. However, a few months after these elections, the same Jean Lesage went to British Columbia to borrow \$100 million at 5.05 per cent interest to finance hydroelectric projects in the province of Quebec. Had the premier of British Columbia felt badly towards French Canadians, as the right hon. Prime Minister seemed to imply earlier today, he would not have approved that \$100 million loan to Quebec.

This is an instance without parallel either in Ottawa or in other provinces. Nobody has ever done that except the Social Credit administration of British Columbia.

And when the right hon. Prime Minister tries to stir up linguistic or ethnic quarrels, as he did this morning, I feel that he is going to far to say the least.

At all events, Mr. Speaker, I think that the premier of British Columbia has every right as a Canadian to express his opinion in the economic field and when he states that the problem in Canada is not one of language but of economics, he is right.

Besides, the Speech from the Throne is almost a verbatim repetition of the opinions Social Credit members have been voicing for the last 35 years. The Liberals have just discovered that. This is what the Speech from the Throne had to say and I quote:

We have witnessed as well a period of economic uncertainty,