

the memorandum I prepared and the ruling I circulated were not accurate, perhaps this might provide an opportunity for you to clarify the issue once and for all so that we would know clearly and precisely what are the rules of the House of Commons in respect of the consideration of estimates by committees and their powers in reporting to the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I am sure hon. members do not expect the Chair to attempt to clarify a ruling which was made on another occasion. Certainly that would not be according to well established practice. I would prefer to allow the matter to stand where it is now. In any event, the hon. member for Peace River has not proposed a motion for the consideration of the House and I suggest we should not pursue the matter further.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I should like, if I may, to follow up briefly the point that has been raised by the extensive reading from a letter by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). It is my submission, and I make it briefly, that in these circumstances when a letter is read into the record it is the obligation of any member to table the letter. I certainly agree with you, Mr. Speaker, that if a minister quotes from a public document that document must be tabled, but I think there is also an obligation on the part of an hon. member who quotes from a letter to lay it upon the table. I believe that is indicated in citation 158, page 134, paragraph 3, which reads as follows:

An unsigned letter should not be read in the House. On the 16th May 1928, a member stated during debate that a letter which he had been quoting was not signed. The Speaker said: "Such a letter should not be read into Hansard; all letters when read must be signed and they become part of the documents of the House."

The only way a letter can become part of the documents of the House is by tabling it and not by being recorded in *Hansard*. Further, citation 159, paragraph 3, which does not refer to a minister or a public document, says:

It has been admitted that a document which has been cited ought to be laid upon the table of the House—

Some hon. Members: Read on.

Mr. MacEachen: The hon. member for Peace River referred to the hon. member for Kenory-Rainy River as holding an official or semi-official position.

—if it can be done without injury to the public interest.

I suggest that the document could be tabled. The citation continues:

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

Surely the hon. gentleman would not be so impolite as to quote from private letters in the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): This is a memorandum.

Mr. Baldwin: On the point of order—

Turks and Caicos Islands

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would hope we would not pursue the matter. I might say that I have already made a ruling on the point which was raised in the first instance by the minister and I am prepared to confirm the ruling I made earlier. However, I do not want to prevent the hon. member for Peace River, if he wishes to, from adding to the considerations for the guidance of the Speaker.

Mr. Baldwin: Normally at the beginning, before the minister rose, I would have asked for unanimous consent to table it, but in view of the sanctimonious hypocrisy of the minister—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin:—who on many occasions when members on this side have sought to table letters has rejected them, I now say that he can table his own letter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: As hon. members know, this question of the tabling of documents, letters or memoranda cited in the course of a debate has been considered very often and there are any number of rulings to the effect that it is only in relation to official documents cited in a debate that there is a requirement that such documents be tabled. When letters or documents have been quoted by hon. members other than ministers in the course of a debate, very often a member occupying the seat immediately next to the member who had the floor would suggest that the document be tabled, and this has always been objected to by the Chair.

The relevant citation in this case would be the paragraph following those quoted by the minister.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Citation 159 (4) reads:

Official papers quoted during a debate should be laid on the Table of the House.

The minister suggests that the document in question is an official paper. I doubt very much that it can be considered as an official paper. I do not consider it as such and would rule that there is no requirement that it be tabled at this time by the hon. member who has quoted from the document.

● (1420)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

TABLING OF STATEMENT ON TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TRANSMITTED TO BRITISH GOVERNMENT

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table, in both official languages, a copy of a statement on the Turks and Caicos Islands which I transmitted to the British government