

Privilege

Centre, and that an audit is being conducted on Keele Street by my Inspector General as recommended by Recommendation 18 of the Pepino Report.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Regina West rises on a question of privilege.

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PRIVILEGE

CITING OF DOCUMENTS

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your recognition. I rise on a matter which I raised yesterday as a point of order.

First, I wish to say that I erred by omission in my point of order yesterday, an error I now wish to draw to the attention of the Chair.

Citation 327 of Beausnes's Fifth Edition is entitled "Documents Cited". I said in my remarks on my point of order, "I admit at the outset that that is not a direct quote or citing of the document". My error was that I misquoted Beausnes's. Beausnes's states, "to read or quote". However, the citation is entitled "Documents Cited".

I went to some lengths this morning to look up the definition of the word "cite". The Winston Senior Dictionary states under "cite":

—indirectly, to give in substance what he has written. To cite is to mention a passage or an author as a reference, argument or example—or illustrate something previously stated.

The Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary (Canadian Edition) states:

To bring forward or refer to as proof or support... To mention or enumerate.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary states, "mention as example".

I contend that the Minister cited the CNR studies regarding the Moncton shops, because in his response to the Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. Harris), the Hon. Member who requested that the Minister provide the studies which supposedly show how the CNR can save money by closing down the operation, said, "CN's studies". The minute he said, "CN's studies" he mentioned, he referred and used as an example, pursuant to the definitions of "cite" to which I have referred. He said, "CN's studies show quite clearly that it will make considerable savings as a result of the decision to close these shops."

Everyone knows, including members of the Standing Committee on Transport, that that is what the CNR said. It said that it would have considerable savings, and the Government and the CNR refused to provide copies of those studies.

The fact is that the Minister cited the rationalization studies of the CNR regarding Moncton shops by the very fact that he cited the studies of the CNR. He then went on to mention, enumerate, what the CNR said in its studies. I contend that if that is not citing, I do not know what is. I respectfully suggest, Sir, that in light of the objective of the question of the Hon. Member for St. John's East, the purpose of it and the subject matter of it, and in light of the Minister's response, that he did in fact cite the CNR studies by quoting a contention of the CNR from both studies. It seems to me that it is that straightforward.

● (1510)

The Minister used information from the rationalization studies of Canadian National Railways to the effect that the rationalization studies of the CNR showed how much money it could save. The fact that the Minister used information that even the CNR has admitted is in its studies means purely and simply that he was citing those studies.

Therefore, Sir, I contend that the Chair should give serious and, I hope, favourable consideration to requiring the Minister to table those studies in the House. The employees are the first ones entitled to know what it is that their employers had in store for them. They cannot find out. They have tried under the Access to Information Act.

It is clear in the exchanges in the House yesterday, it is clear in the definitions contained in the four dictionaries I looked at, and it is clear in Beausnes's Citation 327(1) which states, in part:

... This restraint is similar to the rule of evidence in courts of law, which prevent counsel from citing documents which have not been produced in evidence.

Beausnes's further states in Citation 327:

(2) 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...

There has been nothing put forward by the Government or CNR which would have any injury to the public interest. Only the document cited by the Minister need be tabled. I submit that he cited the CNR studies about Moncton shops. He did it by name, the CNR studies, two direct words.

Citation 327 of Beausnes's further states:

(5) To be cited, a document must be quoted or specifically used to influence debate...

I wish to close my brief remarks by suggesting to you, Sir, that while this may be a departure, precedents have to be set to be followed by successive Speakers in Parliament, although I hope this Speaker is here for a lot longer than I have been.

I wish to close, Sir, by submitting to you that under the definition of "citing" in Beausnes's, and in four different dictionaries the variety of definitions that are included under the word "cite", the Minister has in fact cited the CNR reports/studies, about the Moncton shops.