

*Release of Yves Geoffroy from Penitentiary*

I might also refer to Standing Order 41(2):

A Minister of the Crown, or a Parliamentary Secretary acting on behalf of a Minister, may, in his place in the House, state that he proposes to lay upon the Table of the House, any report or other paper—

That, of course, simply states that he can do it. In this case the minister has set out a case, has said that everything is fine and nothing is wrong, has used these public documents to back up something that in my opinion smells to high heaven, and I say that members of the House, the people's representatives, are entitled to see what is behind the statement the minister made yesterday. That is what I am asking. With great respect, Mr. Speaker, if the minister was sincere in saying that if there was any irregularity or illegality he would agree to an inquiry, he should rise in his place and agree to the application I am now making. If he will not agree, let him forever hold his peace because we will have to draw our own inferences. The minister says he does not like innuendos. It is he who is guilty of innuendos.

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

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I realize that Your Honour was rising to make a ruling, but I wish to say a few words in support of the point raised by the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams).

I recognize the fact that many times members have risen and asked that certain documents be tabled and have cited the rule quoted by the hon. member. Nine times out of 10, or 99 times out of 100, the request is refused. We are always told that the test of this rule is whether it is analogous to what would happen in a court of law. My familiarity with courts of law is pretty thin, but my familiarity with things in the House is fairly wide. It seems that this is a case that meets the requirements or certainly comes very close to meeting them.

Yesterday the minister referred to a certain report and quoted part of that report in support of his argument. Indeed, he referred to a number of documents. It seems to me that this puts the minister's action within the four corners of the rule. The minister, having cited a document and having used it as part of his argument, should be called upon to table the entire document in the House. At least there is the benefit of the doubt in favour of the hon. member for Calgary North. If Your Honour does not agree with him right away, I urge that you take the matter under consideration.

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council):** As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has referred to papers from which the minister read excerpts yesterday.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Three.

**Mr. MacEachen:** One is a letter written by Mr. Geoffroy. Another is part of a report by Miss Cornellier in which she refers to the physical condition of two brothers in whose care the children might be placed. The hon. member says there is a third reference, but I missed that. At any rate, with respect to these two there is no dispute.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

**Mr. Woolliams:** The third is Reverend Nickels' letter which appears about two-thirds of the way down page 51.

• (1200)

**Mr. MacEachen:** Yes, and a reply from the Rev. J. A. Nickels, Chief of the Chaplaincy Services, noting that in view of the positive nature of the reports approval was given for the marriage.

No one is disputing, no one would wish to dispute, the fact that the minister has quoted from these papers. What is of interest, and what probably needs clarification from the Chair, is whether the papers quoted by the minister fall into the category of dispatches or state papers.

**Mr. Lewis:** Read paragraph four as well. It speaks of official papers.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Official papers quoted during a debate should be laid on the table of the House. It says that. That is quite all right. It might be a state paper, a dispatch or an official paper, and it seems to me that if Your Honour discovers upon consideration, now or later, that these are indeed state papers or dispatches or official papers there will be no objection on the part of the government to laying them on the table. But it is not our purpose to seek to expand the application of this particular practice beyond what has been traditional in the House.

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, in order to understand why the Solicitor General (Mr. Goyer) seemed so anxious to keep the House from getting all the facts one should keep in mind what he said yesterday when he stated, as reported in *Hansard* on page 51:

With the consent of the House I could table the remainder of the statement to be recorded in the proceedings of the House of Commons.

That was an unusual suggestion, but understandable. The minister read a portion of the letters. He expurgates the documents from which he is reading in order to support the argument he is advancing. In other words, he provides a selection of what he intends to present to support his case. This cannot be justified, Mr. Speaker, regardless of any consideration. Otherwise, what one could do in this House would be to select favourable matters and expurgate those which are unfavourable.

I can understand why the minister does not want the letters produced. After all, the excuses offered by Geoffroy were false, transparently so, and should have been investigated. Indeed, I am told that as part of this letter or statement Geoffroy gave as the reason he wished to go through a marriage with this lady of estimable record, was that there would be a good mother for his children. Furthermore, that his father and mother were getting too old to look after them. In fact, the father died 25 years ago and the mother died two years ago. If the minister had revealed the whole communication he would then have convinced anyone reasonably desirous of being convinced that somebody was negligent. That is the point which is to be emphasized, Mr. Speaker. Surely parliament will not consent to be paralysed by the action of a minister who, trying to conceal and cover up, refuses to table the entire document in question.