

must say that I do not know whether that is the rule, but it should be. That is my private opinion.

Mr. RALSTON: I am citing Beauchesne, second edition, paragraph 316:

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. The same rule, however, cannot be held to apply to private letters or memoranda. On the 18th May, 1865, the attorney-general, on being asked by Mr. Ferrard if he would lay upon the table a written statement and a letter to which he had referred on a previous day, in assuming a question relative to the Leeds Bankruptcy Court, replied that he had made a statement to the house upon his own responsibility, and that the documents he had referred to being private, he could not lay them upon the table. Lord Robert Cecil contended that the papers, having been cited, should be produced; but the Speaker declared that this rule applied to public documents only.

Mrs. NIELSEN: Mr. Chairman, I do not see why there should be two different rules on different sides of the house. When I read a letter I was requested to lay it on the table. Why should the same rule not apply at the present time?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): The ruling was given by Mr. Speaker on March 7, 1941, in connection with a private letter read by the hon. member who has just spoken.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): What was that ruling?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): The ruling was that an hon. member is not entitled to read from communications unless he is prepared to place them on the table of the house.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I think the ruling is wrong.

Mr. GOLDING: On a point of order, a ruling was given in connection with the hon. member for York South, who read a letter from a gentleman in the employ of the Massey-Harris Company; and the ruling was that if he took responsibility for the contents of the letter he did not have to give the name of the writer. That was not very long ago.

Mr. GRANT: May I read the remainder of the extract? I will take all responsibility.

Mr. GRAYDON: Name.

Mr. RALSTON: There do seem to be conflicting rulings, if that is the case. I recall now the recent ruling. I had not known about the ruling in respect of the hon. member for North Battleford, but I do remember not very long ago that Mr. Speaker, referring, I think, to

[The Chairman.]

this paragraph, indicated that if an hon. member reading a document, took responsibility for the contents, and it was a private document, he did not have to divulge the name of the writer. I think that is the most recent ruling, and the most recent ruling would apply.

The CHAIRMAN: On that question, I believe we should proceed with some uniformity, although I have just expressed my own personal view, which I very strongly hold. On one occasion this week the hon. member for Témiscouata quoted from several letters and, I believe, gave the names of the writers to the minister himself, and no objection was taken thereto at the time. I think we should follow the same procedure with respect to the hon. member for Kings at the present time.

Mr. RALSTON: The hon. member for Témiscouata did not lay the letters on the table.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): This is not being laid on the table either.

Mr. RALSTON: If I may speak a third time, I submit that giving a name and a letter to a minister is not laying it on the table.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): No; I did not suggest it was.

Mr. GRANT: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Order. The Chairman has said that the name must be produced.

Mr. GRANT: It says—

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I understood you to rule, Mr. Chairman, that the name of the writer had to be given.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not so rule; I gave it as my personal opinion. What I said was that I was strongly in favour of giving such names, but the rules are against me.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): It all depends upon whose ox is being gored. When the hon. member for North Battleford produces a letter the Speaker rules that she must give the name of the writer; when the hon. member for Kings produces a letter, the rule operates the other way.

An hon. MEMBER: What about the hon. member for York South?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I do not remember about the hon. member for York South, but I remember that the rule has been stated thus.