under the Privacy Act? I think these are nuances that the Courts, not the Speaker of the House, must define and analyze.

Now, let us consider the Standing Orders. Did the Minister table these documents, this correspondence, in a regular manner? I believe I already said briefly that in making his case, the Hon. Member for Provencher did not refer to a single precedent that would be applicable or to any Standing Order that prohibited the Minister from acting as he did. On the other hand, we contend that under Standing Order 46(2) the Minister had the right to table the documents as he did. We must consider that the first paragraph of S.O. 46 states the principle that a Minister may deposit any papers to be laid before the House in accordance with an Act or Order, and may do so without notice and without seeking the consent of the House. That is the general rule. In addition to the provisions in paragraph (1), paragraph (2) states that there are other circumstances in which a Minister may also deposit papers without notice and without seeking the consent of the House. And those circumstances are described in section (2). Basically, these documents deal with a matter that falls within the administrative responsibilities of the Government. If the correspondence deals with such a matter, then the provisions of Standing Order 46(2) apply and the Minister is fully justified in tabling those documents without notice and without consent. In the factual explanations given by the Minister, and this is even more obvious than before now that the correspondence has been tabled and made public, it is clear that these were representations made to a Minister of Finance with respect to a forthcoming budget and related to his administrative responsibility to introduce tax or financial legislation in due course.

So much so, Mr. Speaker, that the key letter dated January 24 which was tabled specifically refers to a brief presented to Members of Parliament, and the letter does nothing more than comment on that brief. That is why I wonder what Members of the Opposition are complaining about concerning the contents of the letter. I am not talking about all the circumstances, but we are debating a point or order. The question is whether or not the Standing Orders have been breached. I wonder what Hon. Members opposite are complaining about when the Minister makes public representations contained in a letter addressed to him as Minister of Finance by the president of a multinational company. It is indicated in the letter that the representations were related to a brief, and I quote: "Our position was explained in a 29-page brief presented to Members of Parliament concerning the impact of the federal budget of November 12, 1981 on people working in Northern Canada. That brief was addressed to the Hon. Allan J. MacEachen along with my letter dated January 28, 1982."

In the rest of the three-page letter, nowhere is there any mention of the letter being confidential, quite the contrary since the representations are an explanation of that earlier brief submitted after a Canadian Government budget was brought down by the predecessor of the current Minister of Finance. The sole or practically sole purpose of that letter was to explain the brief presented to Hon. Members.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that this correspondence was not confidential, that it amounted to representations made to a Minister of Finance and aimed at influencing him in the preparation of a budget. It was correspondence referring to an earlier brief presented to all Hon. Members concerning the matter described in it and, therefore, such correspondence can indeed be described, as provided in Standing Order 46(2), as a paper dealing with a matter pertaining to the administrative responsibilities of the Government. And this, in my opinion, should be enough to settle the issue. Under Standing Order 46(2), the correspondence now being discussed could be tabled.

● (1600)

In addition, Mr. Speaker, my argument is supported by the citation mentioned by the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans), namely Citation 327(7) of *Beauchesne's*. I believe that this explanation complement the provisions of Standing Order 46(2), since it says the following:

> When a letter, even though it may have been written originally as a private letter, becomes part of a record of a department, it becomes a public document, and if quoted by a Minister in debate, must be tabled on request.

Even if we were to admit that the correspondence was of a personal nature, which is not the case, Standing Order 46(2) would still apply and the Minister was legally authorized by our rules and practice to table the correspondence.

Now my third point, Mr. Speaker. After having said, first, that no rules or precedents were ever quoted to support the point of order, and second, that on the contrary, both our practices and rules and the correspondence itself, since the facts must be taken into account, justified the action taken by the Minister in tabling these papers without giving notice and without asking for consent I must add that even though this consent was not required, it was obviously implicit. Whenever a Member rises on a point of order, the Chair must have the opportunity to prescribe a remedy and the rules clearly state that points of order must be raised when a remedy can be provided, but, in any case, consent was implicit. Indeed, in his explanations which the Chair must take into account before ruling on the matter raised by the Hon. Member for Provencher, the Minister gave his version of the facts, and if you read *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, you will see that, during the Oral Question Period, as the Acting Prime Minister mentioned and as noted in *Hansard*, the Leader of the Opposition and his House Leader, the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), challenged the Minister of Finance to table this correspondence. This is a first point which must be taken into account. They were the ones who asked for the correspondence to be tabled. They were the ones who challenged the Minister to