

Petitions

are giving me the assurance that this will be verified with those people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Under our rules, I am under no obligation to verify the signatures myself. Neither is the Clerk. But again, under our Standing Orders, any Member has the right to check the signatures himself if he so desires.

[English]

Mr. Thacker: Point of order!

Mr. Smith: Point of order!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will recognize the Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills on a point of order.

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Lac-Saint-Jean should not be upset with the NDP strategy, because he is the Hon. Member who said that the Liberal Party would adapt to anything and would be communistic if necessary.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member is not making a point of order.

[Translation]

Mr. Gimaïel: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the petitions be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections for verification, because those petitions are interfering with my right to speak. I ask that they be—

[English]

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have been listening with interest to the wording of the petitions that we have heard from Hon. Members of the New Democratic Party. It seems to me that there has been identical wording in perhaps the last couple of dozen. What I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, if you will hear me out—

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): You've listened very carefully.

Miss Jewett: It's the same problem.

Mr. Smith: —that, as such, they are repetitions. I would refer Your Honour to Bourinot, page—

Some Hon. Members: Bourinot?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This point was made earlier this afternoon. The Chair can recall a number of occasions when petitions on capital punishment were presented in the House with exactly the same wording. There are many instances, in the experience of the Chair, in which wording of petitions has followed exactly the same form, for instance, on right to life, on capital punishment, on a series of issues. There are even precedents of Hon. Members presenting in an afternoon more than one petition at one time. The point has been made by

others in the course of this afternoon's debate. The Chair cannot find that a point of order is involved.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, perhaps if a pertinent reference from Bourinot had been heard at that point, the petitions would not have been heard. I would urge Your Honour to at least hear out the citation from Bourinot which I believe is on the point.

Mr. Deans: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There has been a point of order raised upon which the Chair has reserved judgment. The Chair has not ruled on a point of order which has been raised. At this stage the Chair intends, between now and six o'clock, to hear the rest of the Hon. Members who are seeking to be recognized on petitions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the Parliamentary Secretary has something new to contribute, the Chair would like to hear it. However, if he has nothing new to contribute, I would ask him not to make a false point of order.

Miss Jewett: Sit down. Have some respect for the Chair.

Mr. Smith: It is very difficult to contribute something new when Your Honour has not even allowed me to make my contribution.

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Deans: When you've got a weak case, attack the Speaker!

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I would refer you to page 235 of Bourinot. It states:

Petitions containing lengthy extracts from other documents or publications or having such extracts printed in separate forms and annexed to petitions are irregular.

I would submit that these are really copies of the original petition, which really constitute lengthy extracts from another document.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Smith: Accordingly, they are irregular, and irregular petitions cannot be received. I think that is a valid point of order.

An Hon. Member: That's a serious accusation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Parliamentary Secretary knows the provisions of the Standing Order. The Clerk of Petitions will make a report to the House as to form, as to whether the petitions are in form or not in form. That is a Standing Order of the House, and presumably the normal provisions will operate in the Standing Order.

I will recognize the Hon. Member for Regina West.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I—