

I think it is important that Hon. Members of the House know just what it was the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis was talking about. It was a petition provided to the Members of the House by the Seafarers' International Union and it is clear on the surface, at least to the eyes of the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis and to my eyes as well, that the same hand put a number of signatures and addresses on the petition. However, I do not think it is for us as individual Members or for the Chair to decide. Perhaps it is for the Table officers to decide. It may well reflect upon what kind of meeting it was. Perhaps it was a meeting at which a great many handicapped people were present. Perhaps there was some reason why that was done.

I believe that the manner in which the point was raised has cast some doubt in the minds of those people who are watching this as to whether or not some kind of falsified petitions are being put forward. I think it should be clear to all Hon. Members and to the Chair that I went with the Hon. Member from the Government side and looked at the petition. That appears to be the case on that one petition and only for a limited number of names on a very extensive petition, which obviously contains a great many other bona fide signatures.

I do not think the people should feel that some kind of scam is going on whereby petitions are being tabled that have been put together fraudulently or by forgery. I agree with the *prima facie* point raised by the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis but I do not think that the idea should be left in the House that there are some kind of fraudulent activities going on.

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PETITIONS

MR. SKELLY—CANADIAN MERCHANT MARINE

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I wish to have the honour to present 25 pages of petitions all dealing with the same subject sent by the Seafarers' International Union. I believe that these petitions match those for which there is presently concern. The petition of the undersigned residents of Canada, who now avail themselves of their ancient and undoubted right thus to present a grievance common to your petitioners in the certain assurance that your honourable House will therefore provide a remedy, humbly sheweth that thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in industrial benefits are not accruing to Canadians because we lack a marine industrial strategy, that the federal Government has neglected to implement a coherent marine industrial policy although over two years ago it promised to develop such a policy, and that Canada's economic growth and wellbeing is in jeopardy because of the Government's inaction.

Therefore your petitioners humbly pray that the Government be encouraged to implement immediately a sensible and effective marine policy that will result in the creation of a Canadian merchant marine and the expansion of Canadian shipbuilding and allied industries. And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Petitions

These signatures, Mr. Speaker, are those of people from virtually one end of the country to the other. The petition appears in both languages and is signed by numerous people and by thousands of different hands. I think this would probably reassure the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis that this is a bona fide petition and addresses a very sincere and serious concern of thousands and thousands of people in the country. If that will lay his mind to rest, I would offer him the weekend to examine this petition and examine the issue which gave rise to his point of order. I hope that it will help him.

MR. SKELLY—PROVISION OF INFORMATION FREE OF CHARGE

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Moving right along, Mr. Speaker, I again have the honour of presenting another bona fide petition to the honourable the House of Commons of Canada in Parliament assembled. The petition of the undersigned residents of the Province of Ontario, who now exercise their right to present a grievance, humbly sheweth that the intent of the Freedom of Information Act was to make Government information and files more accessible to the public and that plans to charge outrageous fees for information requests would undermine the spirit of the Act as well as make it inaccessible to less affluent persons.

Wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to provide information under the Freedom of Information Act free of charge. And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

MR. SKELLY—SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present another petition that deals with a very vital and important question. The petition is addressed to the honourable the House of Commons of Canada in Parliament assembled. The petition of the undersigned residents of the Province of Ontario, who now exercise their right to present a grievance, humbly sheweth that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, should have the right to employment, housing and social services.

Wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to include sexual orientation in the Canada Human Rights Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as a prohibited ground for discrimination. And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

● (1600)

MR. SKELLY—REJECTION OF BOUNDARY AT 49TH PARALLEL

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present another petition which is addressed to the Honourable the House of Commons of Canada in Parliament assembled. It is signed by a number of residents of Ottawa in the Province of Ontario.

The petition of the undersigned residents, who now avail themselves of their ancient and undoubted right thus to present a grievance common to your petitioners in the certain