

*Journal*, 1843, page 457. I looked up the first reference at page 427 of volume 7 of the *Commons Journal* for September 23, to 25, 1656. History tells us that it was during the protectorate of Cromwell, and four years before the restoration of Charles II in 1660. There was nothing to support May's declaration. I turned the pages of that old book and read on page 171 that on August 27, 1652 a committee for petitions was appointed to meet in the Star Chamber. Those who have revised May's book have been right on one point, when they wrote in the preface to the tenth edition that "the parliamentary procedure of 1844 was essentially the procedure on which the House of Commons conducted business during the Long Parliament," and it is still the same today. It has not changed with the times.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I will call to the attention of hon. members of the house the reference given by May in the latest, the fourteenth, edition published in February, 1946. Ten references to remonstrances, signatures, forgery or fraud on petitions date back to two centuries before the reform bill of 1832. They are in the *Commons Journals* for the following years: 1667 to 1687; 1688 to 1693; 1772 to 1774; 1792 to 1793; 1807; 1812 and 1813; 1817; 1821; 1826 and 1827; 1831. This book was out of the press last year. Could it be called a modern book?

May's second reference to the necessity of the prayer on petitions was *Commons Journal* of July 7, 1843, in the seventh year of Victoria, page 457. There was no ruling of the Chair about it. All I found was that a remonstrance of the secretary of the National Association, praying the house to establish better representative government, had been laid on the table and it was withdrawn the following Monday. Doctor Johnson calls "remonstrance"—strong representation.

There are so many interchangeable words in the dictionary that they have given birth to basic English. I looked up the *Dictionary of the English Language* by Doctor Samuel Johnson and I notice there that the words petition, request, supplication, prayer, entreaty, solicitation were interchangeable. Here is what he said with regard to "prayer."

1. Petition to heaven.
2. Mode of petition.
3. Practice of supplication.
4. Single formula of petition.

Then in the Oxford dictionary I find, at the word "prayer", under 5:

The thing prayed for or entreated; specifically that part of a memorial or petition that specifies this.

[Mr. Pouliot.]

This is Middle English. And the petitions to the Commons, according to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, shall be as follows:

Must be in writing; must contain none but genuine signatures, and must be free from disrespectful language or imputations upon any tribunal or constituted authority.

And May, at page 795, says:

The general allegations of the petition are concluded by what is called the "prayer," in which the particular object of the petitioner is expressed.

And it adds:

To the whole petition are generally added these words of form: "And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray," et cetera, to which are appended the signatures or marks of the parties.

Bourinot, fourth edition, says at page 234:

The conclusion should be "the prayer," without which no petition is in order. This prayer should tersely and clearly express the particular object which the petitioner has in view in coming before parliament.

The parliamentary meaning of "prayer", in Middle English, was that of "request" in modern language. Let us sweep away the dust of self-complacency and revise our rules and create our own precedents in conformity with modern times. This is to show that "May", who has been blindly quoted as an authority and accepted as such by other authors throughout the British empire, is outdated, because he and those who have revised his book have shown no discrimination and no discernment in the selection of precedents, and it is time that the House of Commons of Canada should have the rules revised in conformity with modern times.

I express my appreciation to the committee on standing orders who have forwarded the petitions which have been submitted to the house as exhibits to the redistribution committee. The question is not at all the word "petition", or "remonstrance", or any other word. The question is that the electors whom we represent shall have the opportunity at any time to get in touch with the House of Commons.

Sometimes a letter is wrongly addressed but it usually gets to its destination just the same and there are very few dead letters. I remember once a letter was addressed to "Jean-François Pouliot, Deputy Minister of National Defence", but I got it and answered it.

Mr. MacNICOL: You would have made a good minister.

Mr. POULIOT: It was a good letter too. I do not pay much attention to the address so long as I receive the letter, and the so-called petitions of my electors have been