

If a petition is received by one member, he or she takes on the responsibility of having it certified but may ask another Member to present it in the House. I have taken part in that process, Mr. Speaker, and I consider that honourable. I have taken petitions that do not come from my riding but come from New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, places where we do not have New Democratic Members of Parliament at present—

Mr. Lewis: Spadina?

Mr. Murphy: I have had them certified. I believe people send petitions to the New Democratic Party wanting their petitions raised in the House of Commons. It matters not to them whether it is the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy), Brant (Mr. Blackburn), Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) or Humboldt—Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse) that presents the petition. The petitions were not sent to me as an individual but to our caucus and people expect a member of our caucus to present them.

I have looked at *Beauchesne* and our Standing Orders since the Parliamentary Secretary indicated his concern on this issue, and I thank him for giving notice of it. I see nothing in the rules to say that the same Member who received a petition, often from people in other ridings, must have it certified and that he or she must present it in the House. It may seem cleaner or more efficient, but if I receive a petition, as I used the example before, from people in New Brunswick and I have received it because it came into my office as caucus whip, I do not feel it is my obligation to present that petition in the House. I will, however, get it certified so that it is ready to be presented and I will make sure it is given to the Clerk of Petitions. It may be appropriate when the time comes for some other Member to present the petition, perhaps someone who has been in the locale in the last little while or perhaps someone whose critic area is more directly concerned with the topic being presented.

It seems to me the Government is concerned that we are making this a political issue, that by holding off petitions and not presenting them all on the date they are certified, by presenting them over a number of days or in the case of having a number of petitions presented on the same day by a number of people, that this is political. God help us, Mr. Speaker, if we are ever political in the House of Commons. How dreadful it would be if we tried to make a Government Bill into a political issue that would not be within the rules of the House of Commons. God help us, Mr. Speaker, if we have the situation with the Government not liking a petition and harassing us day after day in one fashion or another. We had the spectre last fall of the Government House Leader (Mr. Mazankowski) wanting to see our petitions before we presented them. He found that they were in the proper form and we were allowed to continue presenting them.

In the last couple of weeks the Parliamentary Secretary to the House Leader saw the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) pass a petition to the Hon. Member for

Comox—Powell River (Mr. Skelly). The Parliamentary Secretary rose and said that that was not fair, that the petition obviously belonged to the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap. Unfortunately for the Parliamentary Secretary someone had asked the Member from Kamloops—Shuswap to give the petition to the Member for Comox—Powell River because the petitioners were from the riding of Comox—Powell River. This again was part of a pattern of harassment by the Government. To be fair to the Parliamentary Secretary, he did apologize on that occasion.

I do not think the point of order that has been raised today is legitimate. It may be something that concerns the Government in its political role. But if we have had only seven hours taken up by petitions since October, some of which have been presented by Government Members and some by Liberal Members, I would say that some Government Members are not doing their jobs. Lots of people would like members to present petitions. Obviously we are not spending very much time in the House with legitimate complaints, beefs and concerns of people who live in Government ridings.

With respect, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that this is a serious issue. The Government is in a situation to know when petitions are certified. The Government is in the position, as the Parliamentary Secretary has said, of responding on an individual basis to petitions. The Government may not like our political agenda, but we do not like the Government's either.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, on listening to the point of order raised by the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Lewis) and to the reply by the spokesman for the New Democratic Party, I was at first tempted to allow this matter to pass by as just another indication of the ongoing battle between the Conservatives and New Democrats for third place. However, after reflecting somewhat on the arguments presented, I think there is a point here about which comment has to be made.

It is a matter of concern that the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council finds it necessary on a day when there is an Opposition motion before the House to raise this point of order and to ask the Speaker to take it seriously. The Parliamentary Secretary said that you should rule that petitions can only be presented to this House immediately by those who have received them and who have had them certified. I invite you to look at the rules of order of this House, Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 106(3) which reads:

A petition to the House may be presented by a Member at any time during the sitting of the House by filing the same with the Clerk of the House.

I draw your attention to some of the words "may be presented by a member at any time during the sitting of the House". Also, if you look at Standing Order 106(4), it reads:

Any Member desiring to present a petition, in his or her place in the House, may do so on "Presenting Petitions" during the ordinary daily routine of business.

Nowhere in the very precise language used by the Standing Order does it say that a petition has to be presented to this