

Mr. Speaker decided as follows:—

The reception of this Petition is objected to, because of the rule adopted last Session, when, for the first time, the English practice was introduced into this Chamber. These are the words in which the decision of the Chair was then announced:—

“ Though there is no Rule of this House expressly applicable to the Question, yet by Rule 116 it is ordered, that” in unprovided cases, the Rules, Usages and Forms of the English House of Commons are to be followed.

“ The practice in *England* has been clearly against the reception of such Petitions, and I find by a Standing Order of the House of Commons of the 20th March, 1866, it is declared: “ That this House will receive no Petition for any sum relating to the Public Service or proceed upon any Motion for a grant or charge upon the Public Revenue, whether payable out of the Consolidated Fund, or out of moneys to be provided by Parliament; unless recommended from the Crown.”

That decision having been given, The House agreed unanimously to adopt it as the Rule to be followed in future. The present Petition does not in my opinion come within that Rule. It is very general in its terms. It sets out a variety of facts with reference to the construction of a work which would no doubt involve an expenditure of money, but it concludes with these words:

“ Therefore your Petitioners humbly request that Your Honorable House will take such measures as will cause the obstructions to this navigation to be removed, and an uninterrupted line, to the full capacity of the leading channel and the supply of water from the summit level, opened throughout.”

Now, as I take it, this is not a Petition asking for any grant, which would be a charge on the Public Exchequer, and I do not think it would be my duty, sitting in this Chair, to interfere with the right of the people to petition this House, unless there is a clear Rule of this House, which would prevent the Petition, beyond a doubt, from being received. I cannot so apply the Rule, for, by express language, it does not cover this case. This is not a Petition asking for money. It is a Petition asking simply for legislation, and were I to say that the Petition came within that Rule, I should be opposing my authority against the rights of the public at large to approach this House.

If it is the pleasure of the House to exclude Petitions of this class in future, the proper way would be to adopt a substantive Rule which would clearly exclude such Petitions.

I consider therefore that the Petition must be received.

The said Petition was then received and read; praying that the House will take such measures as to cause the obstructions to the Navigation of the *Ottawa* River to be removed, and an uninterrupted line to the full capacity of the leading channel and the supply of water from the summit level to be opened throughout.

The following Petitions were also received and read:—

Of *Patrick Moore*, Mayor and others, of *Egan* and *Kensington*; of *John McConnell*, Mayor and others, of *Bouchette*; and of *George Dunton*, Mayor, and others, of the Township of *Eardley*, all of the County of *Ottawa*; severally praying that the House will take such measures as to cause the obstructions to the navigation of the *Ottawa* River to be removed, and an uninterrupted line to the full capacity of the leading channels and the supply of water from the summit level, to be opened throughout.

The Honorable Mr. *Irvine*, from the Select Committee appointed to try and determine the matter of the Petition complaining of an undue Election and Return for the Electoral District of *Hochelaya*, informed the House, That, at the instance of the Petitioner, the Committee had granted a Commission for the taking of evidence as to the qualification of the sitting Member and matters relating thereto; and by the consent of the Petitioner and the sitting Member, they had appointed *Louis Bélanger*, Esquire, Advocate, the Commissioner to examine witnesses touching the allegation above mentioned.

The Committee, therefore, ask leave to adjourn until such time as the Honorable Mr. Speaker by his Warrant, shall direct said Committee to re-assemble, and take the proceedings of the said Commissioner into consideration.

On motion of the Honorable Mr. *Irvine*, seconded by Mr. *Cayley*,  
Ordered, That the said Committee have leave to adjourn until such time as Mr.