

That the said Committee have the power to send for persons, papers and records and examine witnesses; to sit during sittings and adjournments of the House; to report from time to time; to print such papers and evidence from day to day as may be deemed advisable; to delegate to sub-committees all or any of their powers except the power to report directly to the House; and to adjourn from place to place within Canada; and

That a Message be sent to the Senate requesting that House to unite with this House for the above purpose, and to select, if the Senate deems it advisable, some of its Members to act on the proposed Special Joint Committee.—*The President of the Privy Council.*

Mr. Speaker informed the House that the Clerk of the House had laid upon the Table the Ninth Report of the Clerk of Petitions, which was read as follows:

The Clerk of Petitions has the honour to report that he has examined the petition signed by more than one million persons of various places in Canada, relating to the question of abortion, presented by the Honourable Member for York South, on Thursday, May 29, 1975, and finds that the petition meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

The petition is as follows:

To the Honourable the House of Commons of Canada,  
in Parliament Assembled

The Petition of the undersigned Canadians, 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 therefor provide a remedy,

Humbly Sheweth:

That Parliament's most basic duty is to protect innocent human life.

That the scientific evidence now puts it beyond reasonable doubt that a new human life begins at conception, yet our laws permit the widespread practice of abortion in Canada.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to enact legislation providing for the child conceived but not yet born—the same protection provided for any other person, and also urge Parliament to show leadership in fostering a life-sustaining society.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Thursday, May 29, 1975.

And the honourable Member for Edmonton-Strathcona having proposed pursuant to Standing Order 67(8) to have the petition read and brought into immediate debate.

#### RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member has put into question the idea that we should consider an immediate debate on the petition which was put forward yesterday. The motion is that the petition be now read by the Clerk of the House and further that it be brought into immediate debate.

The honourable Member has referred to a previous ruling of the Chair. I would remind him of that ruling; I do not propose to quote it. It was based on an explicit ruling of the Honourable Lucien Lamoureux whose tenor left no doubt about the principle, and nothing which has happened in the interval persuades me otherwise. The principle of the operation of a representative government, as this Parliament is, is that the representatives are elected to bring here the views of their constituents and it is through them, in debate in the House and by representations to the government that amendments to the law ought to be proposed, discussed, debated and finalized if it is the will of the House. Nevertheless, there are exceptional provisions with respect to petitions once they have been received and certified as to form. The purpose of those petitions is to redress a personal grievance.

The honourable Member is first of all asking that the petition be read. He is aware that yesterday the petition was read by the honourable Member for York South (Mrs. Appolloni) when she put the petition forward. The fact of the matter is that the statement which was read as a preamble to the petition yesterday was somewhat different from that which is attached to the petition today; this, of course, was done in order to make it acceptable as to form. The portion which is now attached to the petition does not in any way state the case as strongly as was stated in the reading of the preamble by the honourable Member for York South yesterday. In other words, it seems to me that one of the remedies the honourable Member is seeking today is less effective than was already granted yesterday.

In the second place, the rule under which the honourable Member was proposing to have this petition read and then brought into debate is Standing Order 67(8), which reads as follows: "No debate shall be permitted on the report but a petition referred to therein may be read by the Clerk of the House at the Table if required;"

Certainly, under the circumstances it does not seem to be required. The Standing Order continues: "—or if it complain of some present personal grievance requiring an immediate remedy, the matter contained therein may be brought into immediate discussion."

Clearly, a representation that an existing law which has been under consideration by the House in various ways and which, on the undertaking of the Honourable the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang), will be looked into by a committee and is to be the subject of further consideration, is a matter of general concern and can in no way be interpreted as a matter of personal consideration. For all three of these reasons, first that the petition has