

## POINT OF ORDER

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Mr. Jim Hawkes (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, while I have the floor, I would just indicate that during Petitions, the rules of the House were deliberately broken by the Whip of the Official Opposition. In light of what happened yesterday and in light of arguments earlier this morning, a dangerous trend is developing. People are deliberately breaking the rules of the House.

**Mr. Speaker:** As Speaker, naturally I have to take into account the representation of the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary, and I assure him and other Hon. Members that I will be careful to ensure that the rules of the House are not broken, and if they are, I will try to take appropriate action.

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, since the Parliamentary Secretary has bootlegged in this accusation, I would like him to make a specific charge if he has one as to what rule was broken. The petitions I tabled were certified by the Clerk of Petitions as being appropriate. They were tabled in due course and at the appropriate time. There is nothing wrong with that.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think I can settle that. The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary has raised a matter and I said that I would of course always be conscious of matters that are raised. I made no ruling one way or the other as to whether or not the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) was in breach of the rules, and I take the representations of the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary as just that. I do not, in my comments, indicate for a moment that I have made any decision that the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier was in breach of the rules.

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to belabour the point, and I know you will be reviewing it, but I would like to remind you that this is just one of a number of charges that the Government has made over the last year in an attempt to restrict the ability of Members of Parliament to present petitions. I think in almost every case when this has been done, you have found that the points have not had any validity and you have ruled against them. I suspect that that will be the case again today. We do have a process for having petitions certified. Obviously this took place on this particular occasion, and I find it reprehensible that the Parliamentary Secretary continues to try to restrict the ability of Hon. Members to present petitions.

**Mr. Speaker:** I did not take it that the Parliamentary Secretary was necessarily trying to restrict the right of Members of Parliament to present petitions. I think his remarks were aimed, perhaps, at the length of the explanation, and these things are matters which the Chair has to take into account. The Chair on occasion has perhaps been too generous, but nonetheless, the Chair has tended to go as far as is appropriate in allowing Hon. Members to express in the Chamber the intentions of their petitions. However, there is of course the rule that the explanation should be brief, and I

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know that all Hon. Members will want to co-operate with me in that regard.

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## MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 29

## CANADA-U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Mr. Speaker:** I want to bring to the attention of Hon. Members the fact that I have received two applications for an emergency debate and they are on the same issue. I first want to point something out. I have some considerable doubt as to whether, given the order, I can even entertain the applications. However, I know the applications, one of which I received last night, are serious.

● (1230)

I must indicate to both Hon. Members who applied that it will take some persuading for me to move in the direction they ask. However, given the issue I am prepared to perhaps overlook to a degree the order for today and I will hear first the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) because his was the first application, and then I will hear the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent). It is the same issue and I am sure they will buttress each other's remarks.

**Mr. Hawkes:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Given your intention to extend some latitude, and not knowing what is about to be said, I hope the Government will have a right of response if that is indicated.

**Mr. Speaker:** The rule is that an application for an emergency debate is to be a succinct statement by the Hon. Member applying. It is not to be a debate on the issue, it has to be the argument for the case. The reason it must be a succinct statement is that otherwise, of course, it would be appropriate for the other side to respond. That is the rule and under the rules only the applicant can speak and the argument must be succinct. I know both Hon. Members who are applying are experienced and I trust they will not take advantage of that rule. I would hope that the Parliamentary Secretary would not have to rise on a point of order because of any infringement of that rule.

I will hear the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry.

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 29 I ask leave to propose a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the public statement by the Deputy Minister for western diversification that the free trade agreement between Canada and the United States will be harmful and is already harmful to regional development programs. That statement is a clear contradiction of claims made in this House by the Government. That statement was retracted only this morning by the Deputy Minister, obviously under clear intimidation by the Government.