

Cape Breton Development Corporation

opment Corporation, with the approval of the Treasury Board, for your Petitioners and their dependants; and

3. To provide such further and other relief in the premises as to your Honourable House seems just and meet.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, now prayeth and will ever pray,

And your Petitioners have, and each of them hath, signed at Glace Bay, on the Island of Cape Breton, in the Province of Nova Scotia, this 6th day of December, in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy.

The petition is signed by Angus MacDougall and others.

Mr. Speaker: This is perhaps where we reach the point the hon. member anticipated a moment ago concerning whether a motion pursuant to the petition filed can be entertained at this time. The hon. member has correctly referred to Standing Order 67(8) which reads in part as follows:

—or if it complain of some present personal grievance requiring an immediate remedy, the matter contained therein may be brought into immediate discussion.

As hon. members know, there are very few precedents in modern times of the House having adjourned its business for the purpose of considering a petition. The only precedent I could find, and which I looked at in view of the fact that the matter was brought to the attention of the House yesterday by the hon. member through the filing of the petition, is the Raymond Rodgers case reported in the *Journals* of the House of Commons for Friday, October 19, 1962. The *Journals* record that by unanimous consent the petition received the previous day and read to the House be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. I think it is relevant and important that this had been done by unanimous consent of the House.

Should there be unanimity in the House that the petition referred to by the hon. member be referred to a committee of the House, perhaps the hon. member might be invited to indicate to what committee he wishes the petition to be referred. I would think that this is the way in which a petition of this nature should be dealt with rather than by a procedure which is akin or very closely related to either Standing Order 43 or Standing Order 26. Perhaps the hon. member might indicate for the guidance of the Chair and of all hon. members what motion he had in mind to submit to the House in relation to the petition.

Mr. MacInnis: May I say at the outset that I had no motion in mind and I was relying upon the good will of the House to give unanimous consent under Standing Order 67. I was hoping that, since there is an immediate remedy available, the House would take this opportunity to examine the matter. I have quite a number of copies available of section 18 of Bill C-135.

As I said before, the problem here is that I believe most members of the House are not familiar with this legislation, and I do not say this in a derogatory sense. Here we have a Crown company set up to deal with a

[The Clerk.]

local issue. I do not think hon. members have examined carefully what they passed in the House. Because I believe the matter has not been examined sufficiently I ask that the House give permission for a debate on this matter, and I ask that all members of the House consider whether there is any reason why any Canadian should not receive that which this House voted for in Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. member has made his point clearly and if he agrees with the position suggested then the matter might be considered at this time and debated by unanimous consent, but the House would have to decide whether there is such a desire or whether that the matter should be referred to a committee. I am not sure whether the Government House Leader has a suggestion to make in this regard.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the importance of the subject matter of the petition. I have not an opportunity to examine the petition but I listened to it as carefully as possible. I think it would be unwise to make a final decision this morning as to what process we should follow. Certainly I would be unwilling to suggest that we suspend the normal business to continue on another important measure. Nor would I be willing to agree to send the petition to a standing committee until I have had an opportunity to examine it and to consider it together with the minister responsible for the operation of the corporation. However, I will undertake to carry out that examination and to consider the matter at a later date.

Mr. MacInnis: Mr. Speaker, when I tabled this petition in the House yesterday I did so under Standing Order 67. The petition having been tabled in respect of a matter of vital importance to Cape Bretoners and it being an unusual procedure, I assume that the government and especially the Government House Leader would have interested themselves in the contents of that petition, especially a petition on a matter so close to the House Leader's heart. It is an unusual case and I hope for the good will and the support of the House in this matter. My whole argument rests entirely on the written legislation and on what was provided by the government in the House. I ask for nothing other than what was provided for in the legislation, and I only wish to get it in the most expedient way possible. I will go along with the House Leader's suggestion as to a committee, but I only hope that hon. members will acquaint themselves with what we have given to these people but have not delivered.

● (11:20 a.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think that perhaps the suggestion made by the House Leader and by the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond is a good one. Perhaps the matter might be taken under advisement for consultation later on.