

**Mr. Prud'homme:** I think you did not listen to me, sir, but if you force me to become partisan, I will.

**Mr. Benjamin:** You are such a neutral Liberal.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** I said I will, and if the attitude of the Hon. Member is such, I may become more partisan and do today what I may do on Monday.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Then you might show up in the House?

**Mr. Prud'homme:** It says:

It is a breach of privilege to present or cause to be presented to either House or to committees of either House forged, falsified or fabricated documents with intent to deceive such House or committees or to subscribe the names of other persons or fictitious names to documents intended to be presented to either House or committees of either House, or to be privy to, or cognizant of, such forgery or fraud.

Examples of this kind of contempt are:

Forging signatures to petitions or subscribing fictitious signatures thereto (*Pilkington's Case*, C. J. (1825) 445;

There are many other cases cited. I just want to put that on the record. Members should follow what I have just said and be absolutely sure about some of the petitions presented. I did not make an accusation about any Member, I just read from Erskine May. If the Hon. Member wants to come with me, we will examine one petition and he will come to the same conclusion that, *prima facie*, I have doubt on at least one petition. That is all I want to say, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent upon the Member who just spoke, not any other Member, to present evidence, if he has it, of illegality or forgery or whatever. Until he does that, I invite him to finish reading the whole rule book, all of Beauchesne's and everything else, and he can take up the rest of the afternoon. We will be glad to listen to him.

**Mr. Huntington:** Mr. Speaker, as a Member who had the privilege of presenting five petitions yesterday, I just want to make it very clear that I would be really concerned if I put forward a petition not in the proper form. I think a Member has his pride to contend with when he is presenting petitions. I suggest that is the issue, and the Table and Speaker's staff will find out whether the petition is in proper form. I think your own pride as a Member is at stake when you are using the petition process.

**Mr. Pinard:** Mr. Speaker, I sincerely think the point raised by the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) is most serious. What he has said should be examined very carefully. I would like that some of those petitions tabled today be looked at in light of what the Hon. Member has said, because we would like the rules of the House to apply. What he was quoting was a clear indication of what can be and what cannot be done in this place. I have not examined the petitions but he has referred to some existing doctrines and I would like those who examine the petitions to take into serious consideration the remarks made by the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis before next Monday.

#### *Point of Order—Mr. Prud'homme*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** The Chair has a difficulty. I have to respond to the point made by the Hon. Member or Saint-Denis by indicating I would be concerned as well if indeed petitions are presented in a manner not consistent with the spirit of parliamentary rules and the purpose of petitions. That could be a fairly serious problem.

I will recognize other Hon. Members on points of order in that regard, but I must say that the Chair can make no decision now because these petitions have not been examined as to whether or not they are in the proper form. That decision will be made probably by Monday.

**Mr. McGrath:** At the next sitting of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** At the next sitting of the House. But in the interim if there are serious problems with respect to form, perhaps Hon. Members might want to reconsider their presentation of petitions. I am in no position to give decisions one by one on these petitions. They will be done, as the Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) has said, probably at the next sitting of the House on Monday, or not later than another day.

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, this is a spurious point of order because clearly it is the responsibility of the Chair under our rules to examine petitions as to their proper form, as you just indicated. Quite frankly, I do not believe this is a point of order at all.

**Mr. Forrestall:** Mr. Speaker, I would not want to comment because it is perhaps beyond our capacity at this point to do so, but I do not want the point of order to go by without raising an observation with respect to the procedure now being followed. Those who are watching us can draw no other conclusion than that motives have in fact been imputed, which may or may not have validity. To use the floor of the House of Commons to question another Member seems to me to be quite improper and somewhat outside of our practices, and I wish that practice to be stopped now.

**Mr. Mayer:** Mr. Speaker, I agree entirely with my deputy House Leader. I find it unfortunate that these kinds of allegations would be made. I know I have had an opportunity to present many petitions, and the practice and right is as ancient and as fundamental to parliamentary democracy as anything else. It is one thing to talk the procedure of presenting petitions, but another thing to talk about the collection process as far as signatures are concerned. I would feel very sad if in fact that is the kind of allegation made. I certainly speak for myself and everyone on our side when I say that in the many times I have had the chance to present petitions, that certainly has not been the case at all.

**Mr. Malone:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) has made some points. It is his suggestion that the Table officers take the weekend to consider them. I sought your attention to simply put on record one caution I would like to be exercised. The allegation is that one person has written a number of names. In the name collection