

[English]

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

LIBERAL PARTY CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Over this past weekend the Liberal Party adopted as policy the declaration of Canada as a nuclear-free zone and the banning of Cruise missile testing. Would the Minister advise the House if policies of that sort would weaken Canada's commitment to NATO and NORAD—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Redway: —and ultimately cause the withdrawal of Canada from NATO and NORAD?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Some questions are more leading than others. Perhaps the Minister would like to respond.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I was saddened to see the resolutions passed on the weekend—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Beatty: —because it is very clear that anything which substantially weakens Canada's commitment to NATO would indeed weaken the Western Alliance and not contribute to the fulfillment of peace. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition who said, when he was Prime Minister, that if we are going to have any influence in working towards world peace we must first of all fulfil our commitments to our NATO allies.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to advise the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Centre that I have his notice of a question of privilege and will hear it shortly.

I would also advise the Hon. Member for Swift Current—Maple Creek that I have notice of his question of privilege and will deal with that in a few minutes as well.

I also might advise the Hon. Member for Skeena that I understand he has a point of order and I will get to that as well.

* * *

SPEAKER'S RULING

PETITIONS INTRODUCING PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

Mr. Speaker: The Chair wishes to report to the House on a matter of some importance concerning petitions introducing laws, and I will read the ruling.

[Translation]

An entry in the *Votes and Proceedings* of November 17 recorded the presentation of a petition whose petitioners requested the tabling of a Private Bill. The entry indicated that

Privilege—Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek)

the petition was presented pursuant to Standing Order 132, which provides a time limit for receiving petitions for Private Bills.

[English]

The Standing Orders relating to petitions were recently changed. However, no account was taken of the implications of those changes in relation to private Bills. The present Standing Orders dealing with petitions are Standing Order 106 and Standing Order 106(2)(g). They provide that a petition must contain at least 25 signatures. No distinction is made between petitions seeking redress of grievances and those requesting private Bills. On the face of it, therefore, the requirement of 25 signatures applies to all petitions including those relating to private Bills. It was for that reason that the petition in question was shown as having been presented pursuant to Standing Order 132 instead of Standing Order 106.

[Translation]

However, I feel the petition should have been presented pursuant to Standing Order 106, despite the requirement for twenty-five signatures. I suppose the fact that petitions for Private Bills are not exempted from this requirement is merely an oversight.

[English]

I do not believe it was the intention of the House to deny any individual or group the right to petition for a private Bill by reason of the failure to obtain 25 signatures. I am therefore ruling, until such time as the House decides otherwise, that the requirement of 25 signatures does not apply to petitions for private Bills, but that the other provisions of Standing Order 106 do apply. Presentation of all petitions will thus continue to be governed by Standing Order 106.

[Translation]

I suggest that the Standing committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure examine this problem in the course of its business and recommend amendments to the Standing Orders as appropriate.

* * *

[English]

PRIVILEGES

ALLEGED MISREPRESENTATION—PRESENTATION OF PETITION

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a question of privilege rising out of Question Period on Tuesday last. My concern is that my action as a Member in presenting a petition on behalf of some of my constituents was the subject of misrepresentation by another Member in this House, specifically the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young).

The gist of what went on during my absence was that the Hon. Member for Beaches misled this House, and indeed