

Point of Order—Mr. Clark

I am sure he offered to us involuntarily and will want to retract in accordance with your ruling yesterday. In relation to urea formaldehyde foam, the minister said yesterday and I quote:

[Translation]

...the quality of this product was first questioned under a Conservative government. Nevertheless, the Conservatives did not ban the product while they were in power...

[English]

The minister knows very well that on August 4, 1978, Dr. Richard Viau, acting head of the chemical and fire safety program of the minister's department, issued a warning to Canadians through the medium of the public press about the dangers connected with UFFI. Now that this has been drawn to his attention and now that I am prepared to indicate that I believe his misrepresentation to the House yesterday was not intentional, will the minister take the opportunity to set the record straight?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, the argument of the Leader of the Opposition is based on an interpretation of the comments made by Dr. Viau. He is quoting a journalist, who, according to Dr. Viau himself, had misquoted him. As for my statement of yesterday that the Progressive Conservative government had an opportunity to deal with this product when it was in power, I may remind the Leader of the Opposition that on November 18, 1979, on a television program called *Market Place*, the commentator, Mr. Paul, who was discussing problems caused by UFFI, said the following, and I quote:

[English]

With Dr. Anderson's concern in mind and the victim's concerns in mind, I went to Ottawa this week and showed our report to two federal ministers, the then Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs—

Today the hon. member for Durham-Northumberland (Mr. Lawrence).

—who said that because the foam is mixed on site it falls under the municipal and provincial jurisdictions for control of licensing and installation. Secondly, I went to the Minister of National Health and Welfare—

Today the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie).

—who said, responding to the request and the questions of the commentator, he had a suggestion. If you think you have a problem, first see your doctor. Then let his ministry know about it.

That is what two ministers of the then Prime Minister did.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker: Order, please! In my opinion this is not a point of order. I thought the minister wanted to set the record straight, and that is why I gave him the floor, but this is, in fact, a debate.

[English]

MR. WENMAN—REQUEST THAT PETITION BE READ AND REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order relating to your acknowledgement that the petitions were in order. I would ask that the petition I submitted yesterday be read.

Madam Speaker: I am sure the hon. member knows he needs unanimous consent for the petition to be read. Does the House agree that this petition be read?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Wenman: Under the provisions of Section 695 of Beuchesne's, I would ask that the petition be referred to the committee on rules and procedure.

Madam Speaker: The hon. member is asking me to proceed to stage two of a procedure when stage one has been refused by the House. If we are to proceed logically, it is difficult for me when directing the debates in the House to proceed to the second stage. I do not even feel I can ask the House if it will give its consent to stage two. Since the petition has not been read, I do not see how it can be referred to a committee or even how the House can be asked to refer it to a committee.

Mr. Wenman: Madam Speaker, since it has been received and found to be in order, I say you can refer the subject matter to the committee should you so wish or should the House so wish. Further on the point of order I wish to quote Beuchesne's Citation 698(2) which reads:

Petitions affecting the House will at once be taken into consideration in accordance with parliamentary usage in all cases of privilege.

The petition yesterday in fact referred to the privilege of reading petitions in the House of Commons. It relates to my privilege directly. Therefore, under that provision I ask that this matter be now taken into consideration.

Madam Speaker: I have had occasion to tell the hon. member what the procedure is concerning petitions. These are the usages and customs of this House. A petition can only be read if the House gives its unanimous consent for the petition to be read. The hon. member has not received that unanimous consent. He would now like me to proceed to stage two which allows that once a petition has been read, it might be referred to a committee or dealt with in another fashion, again with the unanimous consent of the House.

The petition has not been read because the hon. member has not received unanimous consent. I am afraid that ends the procedures which the hon. member can invoke in order to have his petition dealt with, except in the usual way when it is presented to the House, registered, and recorded in *Hansard*.

Mr. Wenman: Madam Speaker, the citation I am referring to now does not refer to whether the petition is read, received, or any other matter. It refers to a petition that has now been