

**Mr. Lewis:** Where is the word "blackmail"?

**Mr. Murphy:** The point I am making is that there are clauses in the petition which directly relate to the statements made by members of the New Democratic Party caucus in presenting these petitions on behalf of their constituents. They have the right not to read word for word what is in the petition, but to follow the themes that are presented in the petition. For example, quite often those who would need to use prescription drugs on an ongoing basis are pensioners, and that this issue is something that we and the people who signed the petition deem to be related to the Government concessions on the matter of the free trade talks.

**Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis):** Mr. Speaker, I thought it was a longstanding practice in the House that a Member who has not debated a motion or resolution could not get a copy of the preliminary transcript, which is better known as the "blues". In the past I wanted to know what some Member said in the House and attempted to get the "blues". I was told that another Member is not allowed to see them before they were sent to the Member who made the statement in the House.

I have been watching this debate very closely and I noticed that the Hon. House Leader is in full possession of the "blues", referring to a debate that just took place.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** No.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** Not the House Leader, but the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary. I apologize to the Hon. House Leader.

I do not know where they are now but the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader was in full possession of the "blues" dealing with something that took place moments ago. I have always been led to believe in the past that this was not allowed because the "blues" belonged to the Member until they were released.

Of course, now we have television and this can be revised. However, while this is a serious matter, if there is a more furious debate in the future, it may be beneficial for the Speaker, who is held in esteem by all Members of the House, to take this into consideration or rule today on the propriety of a Member being in possession of the "blues" of another Member.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps this is something you may want to examine in view of my hon. friend's point that we now have the benefit of television in the House. One can easily recall that particular moment on the television screen and then inscribe it and we would have the same thing. I think you might want to take that into account, Mr. Speaker, when you consider this matter.

● (1520)

I appreciate the fact that I have already spoken once on this matter, but the key to our argument is that there are two very important words in a petition which is presented, "humbly showeth". If one says: "I am presenting a petition which

*Point of Order—Mr. McKinnon*

humbly showeth—", and the petition, in writing, shows what the petitioners mean, then it should not be misrepresented in the House. The point I am making, and the point I think the Chair should zero in on, is whether or not when a Member of Parliament presents a petition, he or she should stick strictly to the wording in the petition which the petitioners themselves have signed and not go off on a flight of fancy.

I have no difficulty whatsoever with Hon. Members presenting petitions. However, I do think if petitioners sign something and point to the prayer when they sign it—and, after all, we have had some discussion on whether or not that prayer has to be on every page—then anyone who comes into this Chamber and alleges blackmail in writing, had better be darn sure there is blackmail in writing and it is not just an allegation or flight of fancy.

**Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge—Foothills):** Mr. Speaker, I would also like to join in this debate because I think this is a matter of utmost seriousness and importance. When a Member of this Parliament rises on a Bill the principle of which we are debating, we are all subject to puffing on a number of points. However, when I rise and speak on behalf of my constituents in presenting a petition, it is incumbent upon me in this highest court of the whole land to present it accurately. You practised in the courts for many years, Mr. Speaker, and you know that the court is the search for truth and the judge must be able to rely totally on the words of the officials who have the right to be there, such as lawyers who are representing their clients. A judge cannot tolerate for an instant people misrepresenting the facts. That is a contempt of court for which people can be suspended and disbarred.

I submit that with respect to petitions, it is exactly the same. The New Democratic Party has gotten carried away with its flight of disinformation, as it tends to do, but that should not be done on petitions. In debate, it is one thing, but with respect to petitions we have to be exactly specific. I believe this matter has to be referred to the appropriate committee for follow-up.

**Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Hon. House Leader referred earlier to the "blues" as he was making his presentation. I would ask the Hon. Member to table those "blues" so we can examine the date in terms of the point made earlier that in fact these "blues" only go to Hon. Members' offices. I am simply asking, if he believes in what he is saying, that he simply follow the typical process of the House and provide us with the date.

I want to refer to some of the wording used by my colleagues in the presentation of their petitions. The Hon. Members opposite, particularly the House Leader of the Government, indicated a concern about the language used in the presentation of petitions. I simply want to bring to his attention that if he thinks the language used by my colleagues in the presentation of petitions was strong, he should have heard the language of the people signing the petitions.