

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 19, 1962

The house met at 11 a.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PETITION OF RAYMOND RODGERS FOR ADMISSION TO PRESS GALLERY ASSOCIATION

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the house that the Clerk of the house has laid upon the table the seventh report of the clerk of petitions.

Seventh report of clerk of petitions read by the Clerk Assistant.

Mr. James C. McNulty (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with section 8 of standing order 70 I request that the petition be read.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Lincoln seeks to have the petition read. Is the house in full agreement?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Proceed.

The petition was read by the Clerk Assistant as follows:

To the honourable the House of Commons in parliament assembled: The petition of the undersigned, Raymond Spencer Rodgers, publisher and commentator, humbly sheweth:

That he is employed as the parliamentary correspondent of the daily newspaper the *St. Catharines Standard*;

That an application from your petitioner for admission to the press gallery association of this parliament has been refused by the said association;

That by such refusal your petitioner is thereby denied the facilities, the rights and privileges of a working newspaperman which are necessary for him to report upon the proceedings of this parliament;

Therefore, your petitioner humbly prays that this honourable house will take such steps as they may deem to be necessary and fitting to enable your petitioner to carry on his profession of a newspaper correspondent and thereby provide a livelihood for himself and family.

And your petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Raymond Spencer Rodgers.

Mr. McNulty: I move, seconded by the hon. member for York-Scarborough:

That the petition of Raymond Spencer Rodgers, parliamentary correspondent for the *St. Catharines Standard*, concerning his application for admission to associate membership in the parliamentary press gallery of this parliament be referred to the standing committee on privileges and elections for consideration thereof and such report as may be deemed appropriate in the opinion of the committee.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVILEGE

MR. FISHER—RIGHT OF MEMBERS TO OBTAIN REPORTS

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): I should like to raise a question of privilege arising out of an answer given yesterday by the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources to my question. The question of privilege relates to what I think is the entitlement of any member of this house to any report prepared by the government or for the government that is in the public domain, or is in the public domain anywhere in Canada. To support my contention in this regard, Mr. Speaker, I should like to read just a few sentences from a newspaper published in Banff and dated Wednesday, October 10, wherein it says:

Banff avenue auditorium will be the scene of the meeting with the author of the report, Dr. H. P. Oberlander, reading his findings and making such explanations as are necessary.

Yesterday the minister indicated that indeed such a meeting had taken place on Tuesday evening and that this was a report prepared by a firm of community consultants. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we have a proper question of privilege regarding the rights of members in this house if, as seems apparent from the minister's statement, the author of a report prepared for the minister reads his findings in public in one place in Canada, yet the minister indicates that the report cannot be given to members of parliament until, as he says, it is studied by the department, and any decision as to making it available to the members of the house will have to be made following that departmental study.

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources): Mr. Speaker, in reference to the question of privilege by the hon. member, I do not think he quite finished reading the reply I made in response to his question yesterday. I think the last statement I made was to the effect that I could not table the report at the moment. I used that phrase "at the moment" advisedly because the report had not come into my hands up to that point.

This report has been prepared by a private consultant in community planning, and it was presented to the Banff community advisory council because they were most concerned with it. I have now received two copies of the report. For obvious reasons there are not sufficient copies to distribute to