

upon directing a request to the Table, obtain a copy of that particular petition.

**Mr. Skelly:** One further point of order, Mr. Speaker. It pertains to the previous comment by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor). Certainly I concur with the Chair that the age is certainly overestimated and some of the ideas come out of the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich)):** The Hon. Member is beginning to be facetious. The Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River had the floor.

The Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme).

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### POINT OF ORDER

#### MR. PRUD'HOMME—SIGNATURES ON PETITIONS

**Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis):** Mr. Speaker, I am not going to direct my observation to one Member in particular. Out of curiosity and for my own enlightenment I have read some of the petitions being presented to the House. I intend to make a further study of most of these petitions over the weekend, but I would like to remind Hon. Members of Beauchesne's Fourth Edition, at page 257, Citation 334 (1). I will read it because I think you will see exactly where I am leading. It reads:

A petition must have original signatures or marks, and not copies from the original—

I attract your attention to the following, Mr. Speaker.

—nor signatures of agents on behalf of others, except in case of incapacity by sickness;

Mr. Speaker, *prima facie* I am under the impression, having rapidly read a couple of them, that some of the petitions have been signed by the same people. I will double check that, but I would just like to remind Hon. Members that if such was the case it would be totally unacceptable to receive these petitions if they have been signed by one person with the same ink, with the same handwriting. This is against the rule, to say the least. I will say more on Monday, or next week, but I would like to remind Members of Citation 334 of Beauchesne, where it is absolutely clear that each signature must be made by each individual person.

● (1530)

**Mr. Mayer:** I rise on the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me what is going on here today is simply the presentation of petitions. Surely, after they are presented, Mr. Speaker, and sent to the Table, it is then up to the Table officers and the Speaker to rule whether they are in order to be received by the House. I believe the concern which the Hon. Member is raising is already looked after, in fact, after the petitions are presented.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. Each day the Chair announces to the House its ruling as

#### *Point of Order—Mr. Prud'homme*

to whether or not a petition is in proper form. It is up to the Chair and its advisers. It is not up to the Hon. Member to decide whether or not there is some kind of *prima facie* evidence of duplication or same signatures. Surely that is up to the Chair and the Chair's advisers and no one else.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** Mr. Speaker, with all due deference to my good friend in the New Democratic Party, it is not my understanding of the rules. I would like a ruling from the Chair about that, if not today, then at some other time. The Table is only asked to receive petitions and see that they are in the right form. It is not the duty—unless I am convinced otherwise—of the Chair or of the officers at the Table to check if the names are factual or if the names do exist. That is not their duty. Unless, I repeat, I am convinced otherwise by Your Honour, it is not the duty of the officers at the Table to check if the name exists or if it is a duplicate. Their duty is to receive or not to receive petitions and to check them as to their proper form. That is their only duty. It is the duty of the Hon. Member, I contend Mr. Speaker, who presents the petition, to be very careful to make sure that it is acceptable and that there are not two signatures of the same person. That is my point of view and I invite the Chair's comments on the point I am making.

**Mr. Axworthy:** Mr. Speaker, I simply want to speak to the point of order with respect to the comments made by the Hon. Member for Portage-Marquette (Mr. Mayer). He said that what we have here is a simple presentation of petitions. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have here a total hijacking of Parliament. The Canadian people should be aware that this has nothing to do with the presentation of petitions. It is simply a way of totally wasting the time of this House and the taxpayers' money. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we subject these petitions to the most rigorous test so that the Canadian people will know exactly how Hon. Members opposite are totally destroying this institution.

**Mr. Mayer:** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the point of order raised by the Hon. Member concerning the signing of petitions, very simply, what I said was that what we are going through as far as procedure today is concerned is the presentation of petitions. It is then up to the Chair, as I understand it, to decide whether in fact the petitions were presented in such a fashion as to be found to be in order. In fact, Madam Speaker did find that some of the petitions presented yesterday were out of order. We do not need any lessons or lectures from the Minister of Transport as to what is going on in Parliament when he has to bring in closure to ram through a Bill which affects the Minister's own part of the country. We do not need any lectures from that side on what this Government is doing or is continuing to do to Parliament, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Order, please. Although a debate which is based on points of order made on the subject of the legislation which would be before the House on some other day may be more interesting than petitions, nevertheless I do not believe the Chair is in a position to allow the debate to take place, based on points of order.