

Privilege—Mr. McKnight

their support for Canadian ratification and signature of the International Human Rights Covenants of the United Nations. There were many provincial premiers who did not quite agree with that at the time, but Canadians across the country indicated they wanted their federal and provincial governments to sign and ratify the International Human Rights Covenants. That petition campaign took place from October until approximately December 10, 1971. It continued on for quite some time thereafter.

The reason I mention this particular campaign is that it resulted in the acceptance, ultimately, by all of the provinces, of that desire to have Canada sign an international human rights covenant. Canada did so in 1976. Of course, this was a desire to bring all Canadians into the international mainstream of human rights.

The same thing occurs here in this desire to have a charter of rights and freedoms entrenched in a Canadian Constitution. This petition campaign involves many people from various walks of life, not only politicians but clergymen, businessmen and so on, in a national committee which is called A National Committee for a Human Rights Charter. They approached me and asked me to serve on that committee. In fact they asked me to act as chairman of that committee because of my past experience in petition campaigns, namely, the campaign in 1971.

The 1971 campaign had some influence in giving Canada that opportunity to share in the international spirit as a signatory of the International Human Rights Covenants. This enabled Canada to go on and sign the Helsinki Agreement. Without having taken the step of signing the International Human Rights Covenants we could not have gone on to sign the Helsinki Agreement. Each step in the human rights battle is an upward one in attempting to build a foundation of understanding throughout the world of the sacred nature of human rights.

With respect to this particular matter, a group came to me and asked me to join in a campaign to ensure that Canada would entrench a charter of human rights and freedoms. I would like to point out that if you look back over the records of time you will see that Tommy Douglas advocated the entrenchment of a charter of human rights and freedoms in our constitution, as did the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker, the Right Hon. Lester Pearson, and as does our present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). It has been advocated by countless members of all parties everywhere, including many provincial premiers who have advocated the entrenchment of a charter of rights and freedoms, for instance, Premier Davis of Ontario.

This particular petition does not mention whether it should be entrenched in England or here, now or then. It simply calls for people to say that they would like to see a charter of rights and freedoms entrenched in our constitution. It makes no reference to time or place.

I believe that most people would agree that this is not an unusual thing to ask as a member of Parliament, as one who is serving his country, and one who presumably represents the whole of Canada, not only his own constituency, who is able to

speak to people everywhere he wishes to in Canada about the sacred nature of the entrenchment of human rights throughout the world. When other countries come to us in Helsinki and say, "How come you and your country are not fulfilling your promises about human rights? How come you do not have it in the constitution?" then we can say that we have it and we are taking our full responsibility throughout the world. This is a goal toward which we should all work, members from all parties in this House.

The point is that I hope it is a solemn desire of us all that this be what Canada will eventually do. I am in no way ashamed to be part of such a program under such a committee. I hope the House will encourage me to continue to do so.

Madam Speaker: I am tempted to say that our Standing Orders are silent on matters such as the one which has been raised by the hon. member for Kindersley-Lloydminster (Mr. McKnight). I would like to say also that a member may write to Canadians outside his constituency to promote whatever he feels are the objectives he is pursuing. In doing so I assume he may use the government's stationery. However, I will reserve judgment on this question since I am not clear whether the hon. member was recruiting in favour of some association through the letter he has written. I wish to examine the matter further before I rule on it.

● (1540)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

DISABLED AND THE HANDICAPPED

Second report of Special Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped—Mr. Smith.

[Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's *Votes and Proceedings*.]

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[Translation]

THE PARLIAMENT OF CANADA

TABLING OF REPORT ON REMUNERATION OF MEMBERS AND SENATORS

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 41(2), I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the report of the commission to review salaries and allowances of members of Parliament and senators.