

Introduction of Bills

petitioners from my riding of Winnipeg North Centre point out that the changes in the Patent Act relating to prescription drugs will increase drug prices for Canadian consumers and severely restrict the ability of average Canadians to buy necessary prescription drugs. The petition concludes by calling upon the Government to withdraw the legislation that is before the House.

OPPOSITION TO CANADA POST CORPORATE PLAN

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I have to present has to do with postal service. The petition points out that the federal Government's proposal to seek financial self-sufficiency by 1988 for Canada Post Corporation will result in cut-backs and deterioration in service of the Post Office at the expense of the Canadian consumer. The petition states that the proposed measures have already resulted in the closure of many rural post offices and the cancellation of rural routes. The petitioners protest the postal rate increases and call upon the Government and Canada Post to pursue revenue-generating services such as electronic mail and parcel delivery to obtain financial self-sufficiency.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-252, an Act to amend the National Defence Act (death penalty).

Mr. Speaker: Shall the Hon. Member have leave to introduce the Bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

● (1110)

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to sponsor today a Bill which is entitled "An Act to amend the National Defence Act". The purpose of the Bill is to amend the National Defence Act in order to remove all references to the death penalty for offences committed under the Act. A sentence of life imprisonment would replace all references to the death penalty.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, in 1976 this Parliament abolished the death penalty as far as the Criminal Code of Canada was concerned. The death penalty continues to exist in the National Defence Act and, as I indicated, the purpose of this Bill is to make the National Defence Act consistent with the Criminal Code of Canada. Capital punishment is wrong, whether it is in the Criminal Code of Canada or in the National Defence Act. Capital punishment is morally wrong whether it is done by hanging or by firing squad under the provisions of the National Defence Act.

Capital punishment is the mark of an indecent, uncivilized and immoral society. I regret very much that the Government is embarking upon a very divisive and emotionally charged debate on the issue of capital punishment with regard to the Criminal Code of Canada.

In closing I wish to indicate that the last time an individual was executed under the provisions of the National Defence Act was in 1945 during the Second World War. In the First World War 26 Canadian soldiers were executed by a firing squad for breaches of the provisions of the National Defence Act. This Bill will eliminate that possibility in future.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

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[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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[English]

POINT OF ORDER

METHOD OF PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I gave notice of a point of order on Friday which I wish to pursue now. I did not feel it was appropriate to pursue it on Friday since it was a Liberal opposition day. This point of order specifically deals with the practice of the New Democratic Party during this session with respect to petitions. Petitions are being certified by the Clerk of Petitions and then formally presented in the House of Commons some weeks or months later as part of a deliberate practice on the part of the New Democratic Party.

I point out, Mr. Speaker, that on Tuesday, March 17, 1987, I requested the date of certification of a petition being submitted by the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis). He replied that the petition in question had been certified on October 1, 1986. That would be some five months earlier. On March 19, I asked the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy) as to the date of the certification of a petition presented on March 19. It was certified on January 6 of this year. Both of these petitions, I might add, were with respect to the Patent Act changes.