

Petitions

● (1230)

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, under the Standing Orders, petitions may be either presented orally or laid on the Table of the House. Of course, Members who want to waste the time of the House may present their petitions orally.

The Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Anguish) was presenting another petition when you interrupted him to explain that you were not going to allow Members to present more than one petition unless they did so the first time they were recognized, and that this was the Chair's ruling. The Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake rose to object to this ruling, and he had the floor for barely two seconds. However, the Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) rose and the Chair gave to the Hon. Member the floor for two minutes to criticize the same ruling. Now, I wonder why the Member for Yukon would be more equal than the Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake? The former has been wasting the time of the House for weeks, and it would seem that just because Member for Yukon can shout out other Members, he enjoys privilege of being allowed to explain his arguments. I therefore wonder whether he is not more equal than others. When the Chair makes a ruling, it applies to all Members, including the Member for Yukon, and if the Chair did not allow the Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake to criticize its ruling, I do not think the Member for Yukon was entitled to the two minutes he was allowed.

Madam Speaker: I may point out to the Hon. Minister that as far as the Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake is concerned, it seemed to me that he was objecting to a procedure I was suggesting in order to speed up the process of presenting petitions. He then started reading all over again exactly what I had asked him not to repeat. That is why I was a bit strict with him.

As for the Member for Yukon, he was entirely justified in raising a point of order. I heard him, as is my duty to do so. He criticized a ruling! Well, I do not know whether he was criticising, but in any case, he did not attack the Chair. He seemed to be giving his interpretation of the Standing Orders, and I do not disagree with the Hon. Member for Yukon, in that he also felt that I was right in wanting to speed up the process. He agreed with me on that point. Where I did not agree entirely was when the Hon. Member argued that citizens have the right to present petitions separately. He seemed to be arguing that if I ask a Member to present all petitions when he or she is given the floor, the petitions are no longer presented separately. Well, they are separate, since all petitions are separate entities and the Member in question may read them one right after the other. So the argument raised by the Hon. Member for Yukon is not valid.

I also wish to point out to the House, as was done by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard), that if the Chair

finds that too much time has been spent on petitions, it has the discretion to ask Hon. Members to lay their petitions on the Table of the House instead of reading them in the House.

Mr. Pinard: Absolutely!

Madam Speaker: It is allowed, it is part of parliamentary practice, but the Chair nevertheless has some discretion in such matters. I would therefore ask Hon. Members to speed up the process so that we can go on to other business, without spending too much time on petitions. It is clear to anyone who follows the proceedings of Parliament that on days that Hon. Members are presenting flocks of petitions, something unusual is going on, and the Chair is well aware of this. It has noticed that on occasion, presentation of petitions is being used to delay the business of the House. Anything is legitimate, up to a point. That is why the Chair has discretionary powers.

The Hon. Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake has the floor.

[English]

Mr. Anguish: Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. The difficulty I have is that in this House—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Did the Hon. Member want to rise on a point of order or to read his petition?

Mr. Anguish: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The point of Order is finished. I have made my comments. That is finished. If the Hon. Member wants to read his petition, I have recognized him for that purpose. If he wants to raise another point of order, I will recognize him for that purpose as well.

Mr. Prud'homme: Just read your petition.

MR. ANGUISH—RETENTION OF CROWNEST PASS RATES

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, the second of the many petitions that I have here today calls upon the House of Commons to find a solution to the grievance that the petitioners have put forth. They ask first that the Crow rate, the statutory rate, be maintained and that the railways of all of Canada must be upgraded and developed into a modern and efficient transportation system. Under no circumstances should the Crowsnest freight rate be changed. And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

MR. ANGUISH—CALL FOR PASSAGE OF BILL C-678

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, this petition I would like to present to the House of Commons today is one signed by some 60 residents of the Brockville, Ontario area, all of whom call upon Parliament to debate and pass a Private Member's Bill standing in my name, Bill C-678, an Act to declare Canada a nuclear weapons free zone.