

Petitions

difficult for the Chair if Hon. Members do not present legitimate petitions when the Chair recognizes them. Hon. Members of the House are responsible for their own actions. The Chair is a servant of the House.

On the point raised by the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Blais), the only observation the Chair can make is that there is a committee of the House charged with reviewing the procedures and practices of Standing Orders. That Committee will have to address itself to the question of whether or not there are abuses of the Standing Orders, but under the circumstances, the Chair can do nothing else but enforce the orders such as they are in the best possible way that the Chair can. It is not easy.

Mr. Deans: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate very much the comments you have made and I also appreciate that you have done extremely well in making sure that Members stayed within the confines of what is allowable in the presentation of petitions. I wonder if I might ask, Sir, on a point of order, whether you might be able to inform us if you are able to ascertain where the petition you mentioned that is in blank form came from and whether it is signed on the back. I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I personally looked at every petition that has been presented this afternoon and every petition was signed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With all due respect to the Hon. Member, a petition that was not signed came from the Party which he represents. It was presented to the Table.

Some Hon. Members: Who, who?

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty to present a petition on behalf of 117 citizens of the community of Riverhurst, Saskatchewan, a community which recognizes the difference between changing the Crow rate and building up the railways, addressed to the Hon. House of Commons in Parliament assembled. The petition of the undersigned residents of Canada, who do now exercise their right to present a grievance, humbly sheweth that western Canadian farmers paid \$131 million to move export grain under the Crow freight rate in the 1981-1982 crop year. This grain, in turn, contributed \$6.3 billion to the balance of trade. The undersigned believe that this is the farmers' fair contribution to the Canadian economy and that western farmers will pay one times Crow, that is, no change.

Wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to maintain the present statutory grain Crow rate and, as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray. I present this petition, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of Riverhurst.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of 42 residents of the area southeast of Regina, the Sedley-Francis-Kronau area. In a petition to the House of Commons in Parliament assembled, the undersigned residents of Canada, who now exercise their right to present a grievance, humbly show that western Canadian farmers paid \$131 million to move export grain

under the Crow freight rate in the 1981-82 crop year. This grain, in turn, contributed \$6.3 billion to the balance of trade. The undersigned believe this is the farmers' fair contribution to the Canadian economy and that western farmers will pay one times Crow, that is, no change.

Wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to maintain the present statutory Crow grain rate and, as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Having had the opportunity to review the question you raised with regard to the blank petition, I believe that we are all in agreement that the piece of paper that you had before you was a French translation of the petition which is being presented and was not intended to go to the Table at all but rather was intended to go to *Hansard* by way of a page. The actual petition itself was filed appropriately and properly with the Table.

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, there was a petition sent to me by some people from southwestern Saskatchewan, Admiral, Cadillac and the surrounding communities, people who are concerned about what they see as their Confederation bargain with regard to the Crow rate. They have asked me to present to the Honourable House of Commons in Parliament assembled the petition of the undersigned residents of Canada who now exercise their right to present a grievance which humbly sheweth that western Canadian farmers paid \$131 million to move export grain under the Crow freight rate in the 1981-82 crop year. This grain, in turn, contributed some \$6.3 billion to the balance of trade. The undersigned believe that this is the farmers' fair contribution to the Canadian economy and that they do not want any change in the statutory Crow rate as has been proposed by the Pepin plan. Western farmers will pay one times Crow, which would mean no change to the present statutory rate.

Wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to maintain the present statutory rate, otherwise known as the Crow rate and, in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a fresh point of order relating to the petition which has just been presented. Again I point out to you, Mr. speaker, that the tactic that is being employed by the NDP, if it were to be followed, could completely immobilize any of the workings of the House. You know as well as I do that on any individual issue on a Bill that we may be dealing with at any given time, we can mount any number of petitions from any region of the country that supports an opposing point of view. Indeed, that is why we have Members of the Opposition.

● (1710)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Blais) has made the point for the second time.