

*Point of Order—Mr. Wenman*

MR. WENMAN—APPLICATION OF RULE OF URGENCY IN  
READING OF PETITIONS

**Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate and await your decision on that with great pleasure. I will now move to the second part, not to the reading of a petition but in fact to the possibility of discussion. I should like to refer to Beauchesne, Section 698(1), which reads:

In case of urgency, a petition may be immediately considered but the grievances must be such as to require speedy and urgent remedy.

Based upon this ruling and upon your ruling in *Hansard* of October 21, 1981, I respectfully ask that you now rule on this matter in the only way possible because of the fact that thousands of middle class working people, working to pay our expenditures in the House of Commons, are threatened with losing their homes. Surely this should, in my opinion and in the opinions of many hon. members, constitute an urgent grievance requiring a speedy remedy.

● (1540)

I therefore submit that this housing crisis is a case where the Speaker can and must use her prerogative as an impartial arbiter, and her wisdom in determining the urgency of acting on behalf of the many private members who have presented similar petitions to this House for the people of Canada in order to bring this matter either into immediate discussion or have it referred to a committee, so that the true interests of democracy in Canada can be served.

I ask, Madam Speaker, that you use your discretion on the urgency rule.

**Madam Speaker:** The first point I want to make is that the petition has not been read; therefore, the House does not know what it contains and it is very hard for the House to discuss the petition if it does not know what it is all about. The hon. member did not receive unanimous consent to have his petition read. I will quote to him from Bourinot at page 239:

Petitions may be at once read and received by common consent, chiefly in order to refer them to a committee; if a member objects it cannot be done . . . but the grievance—

That is the point we have discussed.

—must be such as to require speedy and urgent remedy.

I think I have said that I am using my discretion to determine that the matter raised in the petition did not justify an urgent remedy. That is my decision, if the hon. member is asking me to use my discretion.

At any rate, the petition has not been read and therefore the House does not know what it contains. I cannot see how we can go to the second phase and have it discussed. I therefore cannot receive the suggestion of the hon. member and ask for

the consent of the House that the petition be discussed, as it has not been read.

**Mr. Wenman:** I agree with your decision completely, Madam Speaker. The reason the petition has not been read in this House is because you must use your discretion. The petition was received yesterday in this House; it was received by you and found—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I have said that I used my discretion and felt the matter did not justify an urgent remedy. That is really a ruling and it is the decision I have now informed the member of several times. I would ask him not to comment any further on it.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### PETITIONS

MR. CLARK—EFFECTS OF HIGH MORTGAGE INTEREST RATES

**Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I rise to lay upon the Table of the House of Commons certain petitions from individuals across the country who are deeply concerned about the impact of high interest rates upon their ability to keep the homes they have spent their lives acquiring.

I should say in relation to at least one of the couples who signed, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Harte of Chippawa, Ontario that it is my understanding that they have faced in the last two days, or will face shortly, the immediate prospect of the loss of their house. That speaks to the question of urgency. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that the prospect of losing a house for which they have laboured long is a matter of the utmost urgency to Canadians. It is not a matter which allows for judicial recourse; the only recourse they have is to this House of Commons. They, along with some 525 other citizens of the region of Niagara Falls and the Niagara Peninsula, have asked that I lay upon the Table one petition in their name.

In addition to that obviously urgent case of Mr. and Mrs. Harte of Chippawa, Ontario there are undoubtedly other signatories of that petition who are facing similar personal urgency in their lives.

I want to lay upon the Table a petition signed by 31 residents of the community of London in the province of Ontario; a petition signed by 13 residents of the city of Kitchener-Waterloo in the province of Ontario; 41 signatures attached to a petition from residents of the city of Stoney Creek in the province of Ontario and 235 signatures on a petition, all residents of the city of St. Catharines in the province of Ontario, many of whom, as in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Harte, are facing a situation of the utmost urgency brought upon them by the imminent prospect of losing a home for which they have laboured all their lives with an eye to maintaining that home.