

*Petitions**[Translation]*

Mr. Waddell: I hope the Minister is not going to interrupt while I present a petition in the other official language of Canada.

To the Honourable the House of Commons of Canada, in Parliament assembled.

The petition of the undersigned residents of Canada who now exercise their ancient and unchallenged rights to present a grievance, with the assurance that your honourable House will provide a remedy,

Humbly sheweth that:

Whereas western Canadian farmers paid \$131 million to move export grain under the Crow freight rate in the 1981-82 crop year.

That this contributed \$6.3 billion to the balance of trade of Canada.

Whereas the undersigned believe that this is the farmers' fair contribution to the Canadian economy.

And whereas western farmers will pay one time Crow.

Wherefore the undersigned humbly call upon Parliament to maintain the present statutory grain Crow rate.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

[English]

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, the point of order I am making is that it is evident from the behaviour of the Members of the New Democratic Party that they are systematically utilizing one of the rules or orders in the Standing Orders in order to prevent our reaching Orders of the Day. The point is that the abuse of the rules constitutes a disorder.

An Hon. Member: You are perceptive.

Mr. Blais: The hon. gentleman across the way says I am very perceptive in identifying the ploy that they are using.

One of the functions of the Chair, as you will recognize, Mr. Speaker, is to maintain order in this place in order to permit the House to function in an orderly fashion. Any abuse of the rules or Standing Orders of this House constitutes disorder and ought to be recognized as such by the Speaker and ought to be dealt with as such by Mr. Speaker asking the hon. gentlemen who are engaging in that disorder to cease and desist.

My point is that the Standing Orders of this House are supposed to foster the debate among Members and ought not to be abused. It can be seen from the presence here of all members of the New Democratic Party, which has not happened before so late in the day, that that is their intention.

In addition, they have made public statements to the effect that they will use any measure they have at their disposal in order to stop this House from debating a Bill. Bills are made to be debated in this House and then put to a vote. Obviously the gentlemen of the NDP do not want that to happen. In effect, they are acting against the basic principles of parliamentary democracy. They are doing that with the full knowledge of

what their intentions are. Mr. Speaker, for you to permit that to be carried out in effect permits disorderly conduct in the House.

• (1700)

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I shall speak to the House in the other official language. It is unfortunate that the reactionary Members of the New Democratic Party—I mean reactionary in the broadest sense of the word—and as conservative a lot as we have ever met up with, should be using dilatory tactics in order to obstruct the proceedings of this House. They call themselves the New Democratic Party, but they are using anti-democratic tactics to prevent this House from starting proceedings that are essential to the national interest. The correct approach is to analyze the measures that are presented and provide the Canadian people with arguments that could persuade it to oblige us to vote against this Bill or at least to refrain from tabling the Bill in the House. They are doing something else entirely. They are trying to use a measure that is provided for in the Standing Orders in order to obstruct debate on the matter before the House.

Mr. Speaker, our conclusion must be that this bunch of rowdies I see before me, and I hope the term is parliamentary, that these rowdies have failed to recognize the essence of parliamentary democracy, which is to provide a forum for open, frank and comprehensive debate among intelligent Members of Parliament. It is obvious that intelligence is not with us this afternoon.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Standing Order of the House is clear. Standing Order 71 subsection (1) reads:

71.(1) A petition to the House may be presented by a Member at any time during the sitting of the House by filing the same with the Clerk of the House.

It goes on in subsection (2):

(2) Any Member desiring to present a petition in his or her place in the House must do so during Routine Proceedings and before Introduction of Bills.

Subsection (3) reads:

(3) On the presentation of a petition no debate on or in relation to the same shall be allowed.

The Chair has tried within the limits of the Standing Order to enforce the Standing Order. Some Hon. Members have attempted to debate and they have introduced extraneous matter, which is contrary to the Standing Order. The Chair has a much more serious concern, however. The Chair has received what is alleged to be a petition containing a written statement but containing no names or signatures. The Chair's recollection of the subject matter of the petitions that have been read is reasonably accurate, although sometimes confused, but the fact is that this was a petition that obviously came from the side of the House which is on my left and not from the side of the House which is on my right. It becomes