

Petitions

Speaker Michener, on Friday, June 19, 1959, made this point very clearly when he said:

It has been strongly urged by some Members that the House should not set in motion its power to try and to judge the conduct of a Member unless such Member is charged with a specific offence. It is urged further that not only must he be charged, but that he must be charged by a Member of the House of Commons standing in his place.

In my view, simple justice requires that no honourable Member should have to submit to investigation of his conduct by the House or a committee until he has been charged with an offence.

After careful consideration, it is the opinion of the Chair that this issue involves basically a difference of opinion as to the interpretation of the facts and of what has been said.

I would like to remind all Hon. Members of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition, Citation 19(1):

A dispute arising between two Members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfill the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

The Hon. Member may have a grievance but, in both incidents he raised, I must advise him that he does not have a prima facie case of privilege and that this matter should be brought before the House through a different process.

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PETITIONS

MR. ANGUISH—TESTING OF CRUISE MISSILE ON CANADIAN SOIL

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition which I would like to present to the House today. It was brought to me by some residents of the Province of Quebec. They started out on December 12 from Quebec City and had a fast on December 25. Their intention in presenting this petition for me to bring to the House is that they wanted to protest the testing of the Cruise missile—

Mr. Speaker: Order. There is an established format for the presentation of petitions. The Hon. Member should state what is in the petition in quick summary form.

Mr. Anguish: They are protesting the testing of the Cruise missile and the cost of the arms industry compared to the high level of poverty. There are some 15,000 names which I am presenting here today. The signatures are mainly from the Province of Quebec.

The petition is to the honourable the House of Commons of Canada in Parliament assembled. The petition of the undersigned residents of Quebec, who now avail themselves of their ancient and undoubted right thus to present a grievance common to your petitioners in the certain assurance that your honourable House will therefore provide a remedy, humbly showeth that the petitioners formally object to the testing of the Cruise missile over Canadian territory.

Wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to withdraw Canada totally from the nuclear armaments race between the American and East bloc

countries of which the Cruise missile is but one part. And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

MR. CORBETT—CLOSURE OF POSTAL SUBSTATION

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition today signed by scores of my constituents from the village of Fairvale Station who are protesting the closure of their post office substation. The post office has served that community well over a good number of years and they ask the post office to reconsider its decision to close this facility so that that service may remain.

MR. SCOTT (VICTORIA-HALIBURTON)—TAXATION OF DISTILLERS

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition signed by 116 citizens of the riding of Victoria-Haliburton in Ontario who are duly concerned over the method of taxation of the distillery industry by both the federal and provincial governments. These petitioners object to unreasonable increases in the federal excise duty and sales tax on distilled spirits and request that the taxation system be revised to prevent further loss of jobs in the industry.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

STANDING COMMITTEES

CONCURRENCE IN FOURTH REPORT OF STRIKING COMMITTEE

Mr. Charles Turner (London East) moved:

That the Fourth Report of the Striking Committee, presented to the House on Friday, January 20, 1984, be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have been informed that all Members of the House are just chomping at the bit, ready to go to work on the various House of Commons committees.

As the report suggests, the Striking Committee has decided to retain the status quo as to the basic membership of committees. This does not mean that individual changes cannot be made when necessary through the Whip's office.

The composition with regard to Party representation remains the same, even though both opposition Parties have some reservations with regard to how these numbers compare to the composition of the House. The reason that this has been decided is that our Provisional Standing Orders by which the size of committees were reduced are still in the experimental stage. It is still too early to completely assess the experiment. The jury is still out.

Before major changes are made, we believe that the experiment should be given more than one year to be assessed. That is why the House extended the Provisional Standing Orders