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HINDS' PRECEDENTS  
OF THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES

INCLUDING REFERENCES TO PROVISIONS  
OF THE CONSTITUTION, THE LAWS, AND DECISIONS  
OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE

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Clerk at the Speaker's Table

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has from the earliest days of the House been presented as of that class. They were described on April 16, 1879,<sup>1</sup> by Mr. Speaker Randall:

State legislatures have a constant habit of asking by joint resolution (which is the ordinary mode of communication between State legislatures and Congress) for the construction of public buildings, light-houses, improvements of rivers and harbors, etc., and the committees of this House having charge, respectively, of those subjects have uniformly introduced legislation based upon such communications from State legislatures.<sup>2</sup>

**3313. Origin of the order for the former call of States for petitions.**—The order in which the States should be called for petitions in the morning hour was a subject of considerable debate, and the order beginning with Maine, established March 13, 1822, was not established without considerable debate. Mr. John Randolph, of Virginia, preferred to begin with the extreme southern States; but it was shown to him that the northern colonies signed the Declaration of Independence first.<sup>3</sup>

This order has long since been abandoned, the States no longer being called for petitions. The States now are called only at the beginning of a session, when Members respond by States. The order of this call is alphabetical.

**3314. The rule requiring petitions to be sent to the Clerk's desk is no invasion of the constitutional right of petition.**—On May 13, 1880,<sup>4</sup> Mr. Richard W. Townshend, of Illinois, rising in his place, proposed to present a petition of sundry citizens praying for the repeal of the duty on salt.

Mr. Thomas B. Reed, of Maine, objected that the petition should go to the petition box under the rule.

Mr. Townshend claimed that, notwithstanding the rule, under the Constitution the people could not be deprived of the right to petition the Government for a redress of their grievances.

The Speaker<sup>5</sup> said:

The people are not deprived of their right of petition. On the contrary, there is a clause in the Constitution which provides that each House shall determine the rules of its proceedings, and one of the rules of this House is in regard to the manner of presenting petitions. \* \* \* The House, in the opinion of the Chair, has not attempted to abridge that right. On the contrary, it has adopted a rule by which the presentation of petitions may be facilitated.

**3315. A Member may present a petition from the people of a State other than his own.**—On January 25, 1836,<sup>6</sup> Mr. John Quincy Adams, of Massachusetts, offered to present a petition from citizens of western Pennsylvania, which,

<sup>1</sup> First session Forty-sixth Congress, Record, p. 486.

<sup>2</sup> For examples of memorials of States see memorial of Massachusetts legislature, offered June 29, 1813, relative to the existing war; also another from Maryland on the same subject. (First session Thirteenth Congress, Annals, pp. 334, 1204.) Also resolutions of Maryland legislature relative to the title of President Hayes, presented April 15, 1878 (second session Forty-fifth Congress, Journal, pp. 844, 845; Record, pp. 2522-2524), and admitted by Mr. Speaker Randall as a memorial from a State. Such memorials are treated as public in their nature.

<sup>3</sup> First session Seventeenth Congress, Journal, p. 350; Annals, p. 952.

<sup>4</sup> Second session Forty-sixth Congress, Record, pp. 3322, 3323.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel J. Randall, of Pennsylvania, Speaker.

<sup>6</sup> First session Twenty-fourth Congress, Journal, p. 235.