

Mr. WHITENER. Is there anything in it which would, in any way, infringe upon the rights of the people to petition the government for redress of grievances?

Mr. FOUNTAIN. I see nothing in it. The only thing that I can envision there is a possibility of a complete abuse of discretion on the part of an individual for which the person petitioning would have a right to take the matter up and have it reviewed. If that was true in this case we would have little trouble in passing legislation placing reasonable restrictions or requirements upon the individuals in the exercise of their rights to petition.

PRECEDENTS FOR LEGISLATION

Mr. WHITENER. I note that in the 89th Congress, on behalf of the Shriners the Congress enacted into law, Public Law 89-514 (H.J. Res. 1178, approved July 19, 1966). I remember the hearings on it, and the testimony of some of the witnesses who participated in writing the Commissioners' report on this legislation urging that we enact that bill into law, that was done. That bill gave to the Shriners Convention the right to hold their meetings and to parade here in the District of Columbia. While I will not undertake to read all of it, I note that it has a provision in it as follows:

The corporation shall indemnify and save harmless the District of Columbia, the United States, and the appropriate agencies of the United States against any loss or damage and against any liability whatsoever arising from any act of the corporation or any agent, licensee, servant, or employee of the corporation.

This is what we did to the Shriners, and we required a bond of them. The American Legion had a convention here, and we passed Public Law 89-25 (H.J. Res. 195, approved May 22, 1965), which said:

And the corporation shall indemnify and save harmless the District of Columbia, the United States and the appropriate agencies of the United States against any loss or damage and against any liability whatsoever arising from any act of the corporation or any agent, licensee, servant, or employee of the corporation.

And, further:

The corporation shall give a good and sufficient bond for the safe return of such property in good order and condition, and the whole without expense to the United States.

That is what we said about the American Legion. The same language applied to the Shriners; were required to see to it that the property that they used and "such structures, stands and grounds that they use shall be restored to their previous condition."

And the Shriners who have contributed so much to the welfare of this Nation were required to give a bond in order to have a meeting in the Capital City of our Nation—which was required of them to give assurances that they would restore the public property to its former condition.

Can you visualize any sane reason for contending that should not be required of any other organization or group?

Mr. FOUNTAIN. I certainly cannot.

Mr. WHITENER. Thank you very much.