

**Senator Olson:** Yes, he abused it. He said that if we were going to do all these prestudies, we did not need the Senate committees.

**Senator Grafstein:** Why would you not correct a clear and present danger? Is that not what a legislative body is for?

**Senator Murray:** We only did prestudy when the Senate agreed to it.

**Senator Olson:** Are you going to tell the people in Canada that there are regional disparities because those Liberal-type senators did not do a prestudy? Is that a good reason not to correct a very serious injustice when it is right in front of your nose and you have an opportunity to correct it by voting the appropriate way tomorrow afternoon? It is ridiculous.

Senator Barootes states that it might be a good thing to maintain the high price of heating oil. I could not believe that anyone would say anything like that. He said, "Make heating fuel expensive enough and people might use a little less." Do you want people to freeze a little more? That is exactly what you said, that there would be some incentive to conserve heating fuel by turning the thermometer down to 65. I do not like to be in a house when it is at 65 degrees, and I doubt whether many Canadians like it either. I like the heat to be around 70 degrees, and if there is enough fuel in the country to meet the supply, I do not think the government should try to set up a taxation structure that will force people to live in misery. Is that what you want to do? That is what you said.

**Senator Barootes:** That is somewhat out of context.

**Senator Olson:** Honourable senators opposite have complained every time I have tried to point out that there are many other situations where regional disparities exist in the application of this tax. However, I said at the outset that I did not intend to address all of those disparities tonight. The people in my part of Canada will be paying approximately 20 per cent more federal sales tax because of the way this bill is structured, because almost all of the manufacturing plants are located in central Canada and we have to pay the high cost of freight. That is not fair. However, I will not pursue that matter tonight. I am talking about fuel and electricity costs, because those are outstanding examples of the unfairness and regional disparity in the way this tax is structured and applied.

I was impressed by questions asked by Senator Austin, following the speech made by Senator Hays, concerning all the legal problems. I do not believe that honourable senators opposite have thought those points through. We face enough problems with the provinces regarding unity and their right not to pay federal taxes. I will not get into the matter, but I am sure that there will be legal battles for years to come if this tax is brought in in its present form.

● (2200)

The spokesmen for the government, including particularly the Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations, who was supposed to promote peace, harmony and tranquillity between the two levels of government, say, "Not one amendment. No way. We're not going to make any amendments."

[Senator Murray.]

**Senator Murray:** Who said that?

**Senator Olson:** You did. That is exactly what you told us about the Meech Lake Accord, a seamless web that could not be changed without it all coming apart.

**Senator Murray:** I heard Senator Lucier quoting me as having said the same thing. Senator Lucier is clearly your authority. Tell me when and where I made such a statement.

**Senator Grafstein:** We made amendments in this place and you would not accept them.

**Senator Olson:** Perhaps I will have to take that remark back until I can find the source.

**Senator Lucier:** Senator Olson, you will not have to take it back. He made the comment on the news. He said that he would not accept amendments because there would be no time because they would have to go back to the House of Commons.

**Senator Olson:** I heard about that.

**Senator Murray:** I never said that.

**Senator Olson:** I have witnesses who heard you say it.

**Senator Murray:** I said that there was great difficulty with it.

**Senator Austin:** Can anyone show us a single time when Senator Murray has accepted an amendment to any government legislation?

**Senator Murray:** Senator Lucier quoted me as saying that no amendment would pass. How could I possibly take that position in a house that is as evenly balanced as this one about amendments I have not seen?

**Senator Lucier:** I thought it was a little strange myself.

**Senator Murray:** It is fiction.

**Senator Olson:** Can I take it that Senator Murray has softened his attitude slightly from what he said the other day? Now he is saying that if we come up with an amendment that is good enough, he might accept it.

**Senator Grafstein:** Ask him if he can suggest any.

**Senator Olson:** I suggest that there are no better examples than the one in front of the Senate right now. By this measure we are trying to correct a regional discriminatory inequity. It is part of the Senate's role. There are all kinds of regional discriminations in this bill, but this is a bad one. It is so simple to fix it. The government could do it tomorrow.

Honourable senators know that our objective is to kill the bill. We have reached the point where it may not be possible to achieve that objective, so we are ready to look at some improvements. Here is one suggested improvement. I would appreciate it if the Leader of the Government would give us an undertaking that he will at least correct this provision.

I will conclude by appealing to senators opposite to set aside their partisanship and take up their responsibility as senators. When Confederation was discussed approximately 124 years ago, between 1864 and 1867, there was probably more discussion on how to protect the smaller provinces, particularly Nova