

Routine Proceedings

I made a suggestion that Your Honour do so, so that you could be fully versed in the facts and that the members who are putting arguments forward could also get the facts.

As I have indicated, we have not yet seen the report of this committee. It has been tabled, but copies are not yet available to me. I understand it is quite lengthy, but I do not know what it contains. I would like an opportunity to review the report so I can comment on it in making these submissions. I want to know if it says something about what went on in the committee. I want to know if it points to the procedural irregularities that make it such a repugnant document. We are not being given that opportunity before we advance arguments on it to your Honour.

• (1310)

If that is so, I will be raising more arguments on Monday, and if I discover other irregularities, I will raise more arguments whether or not Your Honour has ruled. I will bring another point of order and raise it on a separate point.

I suggest that it is unfair to require us to proceed today with this when there are other documents in existence which we have not seen. In addition, the proceedings in the committee have not yet been printed. I understand the committee finished its work yesterday, if I am not mistaken, and I do not know why members could not be allowed the courtesy of an opportunity to review those proceedings before they have to make submissions. It may be fine for the members of this House who are members of the committee to say what they know went on, but for those of us who are to make procedural arguments on the basis of the improprieties of the chairman of the committee, it seems to me that we ought to have an opportunity to review those improprieties in detail.

That is being denied by the fact that I am now compelled to make arguments based on the evidence I hear from members who happened to be there and who give their versions of what happened. I am not disputing the accuracy, but anyone who has listened to witnesses know that people's recollections differ, people's view of what is important and unimportant differs, and various

people will make various comments and will remember different things; memory is slightly selective.

We are hearing bits and pieces of the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Finance, which studied this bill. It would have been better had we waited until we had in hand the transcript of the proceedings so that we could discuss it intelligently and with all of us on an equal footing. But that is not to be the case, apparently. I am sorry that Your Honour feels compelled to hear this argument today rather than to defer it, since the ruling is going to be deferred, in any event.

Having said that, I want to deal with some of the substantive arguments that have been put forward. I suggest, as I did earlier in my submissions, that the important thing in this whole proceeding is whether or not this committee report is non-receivable by the House. I suggest that that is exactly what has happened.

The principle of the common law, Mr. Speaker, is quite clear, and that is that there is a requirement for natural justice, and this committee has been bulldozed by its chairman, who used bully tactics on the opposition. From the evidence we have heard, if you can call it evidence, but certainly from the witnesses who were there, on his own volition he chucked out some motion that was currently being debated before the committee, without seeking the consent of the committee, and the committee was seized with the motion.

Your Honour knows perfectly well that once this House is seized with a motion it cannot be withdrawn by the mover without the consent of the House; it has become, in some sense, the property of the House. I understand in this committee the motion that was the property of the committee and was being debated in the committee was withdrawn by the chairman, unilaterally.

That is highly improper and contrary to all of the traditions of this House. And then, this same bully chairman apparently on his own volition from what I am hearing, introduced a motion, not moved by any of the members of the committee, as I understand it. He simply introduced it on his own and said that the committee was now going to have to vote on this motion.

Mr. Hawkes: He made a ruling.