

Privilege

Conservative majority on the committee will inevitably support. Consequently, we ought to be concerned about some of the so-called leaks that he has been providing in terms of committee business.

It is a point of concern for the hon. member, and I do not want to understate its importance. On the other hand, we do not need to overstate the fact that these points might be frustrating for people having to speculate or justify why the Conservatives would want to even maintain the goods and services tax at 7 per cent or 9 per cent, something which requires the hon. member to explain why it would be appropriate to tax the sale of every single house being sold in the country. I can understand the frustration that the hon. member would have in responding to that. I think he would be well advised to speak to the chairman of the committee and admonish him for commenting prematurely.

Mr. Dorin: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add two further points that have arisen from the discussion that has gone on so far. In matters like this we must make a distinction between what occurs and what someone might say himself, that is, if he is prepared to advocate or suggest something, especially when those suggestions take place in advance of any discussions that may have commenced.

For example, I have made several speeches on this subject going back to well before the public hearings were held, as well as over the course of the public hearings. I have advanced certain objectives with regard to this matter and have made certain points and said that I felt that this proposal would be improved by certain measures.

The chairman of the finance committee has done the same thing, and probably many others have done that as well. There is a difference between what a person says he believes would be an improvement and a suggestion he thinks he will put forward for consideration, versus something that flows later from deliberations once they have occurred.

I wish to go back to the original article from which most of the others flowed, the one of November 10 which I quoted earlier. When asked if the Conservatives had decided to go with the 7 per cent rate and a broader

base, committee chairman Don Blenkarn said, "I am not going to confirm or deny that."

He went on to say:

I wouldn't want to kid you but I guess we have made some decisions about rate and base and how you do it and how you put it together. It's going to be quite a report.

That was the extent of it. There were no direct suggestions of what might or might not be in the report. He said that it is going to be quite a report. There were no suggestions of what other members had said or might not have said.

There were no suggestions until November 14, after which there were many stories quoting members of the opposition and in fact certain unnamed members of the government, and three were mentioned. I may be one of them because the gentleman in question phoned me. However, I told him I was completely prepared to say anything I had to say on the record, that I felt it was inappropriate and that all matters were up for consideration. I said that all these items raised by the witnesses during the course of six weeks of public hearings were being discussed and considered, as they should appropriately be.

The point I draw here is that it is one thing to talk about something you want to advocate as an individual member and put forward to the committee, but it is another thing to talk about what other people have said or what the committee as a whole may have said.

As a final reference I would say that I was contacted by many reporters and many television stations, including *Canada AM*, to appear on its morning broadcast last week. I know that the chairman of the finance committee was also contacted and asked to appear. I know the member for Ontario was contacted. All declined. Two members of the opposition party chose not to decline.

I think we can draw a distinction between those two types of discussion of specific issues or issues that may have been raised in the general debate as opposed to discussions and comments that are supposedly suggesting what took place during committee.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Northwest and other members have commented upon the hon. member's complaint that certain matters were discussed within committee under circumstances in which, apparently, members of the committee felt that they were speaking in confidence and that reports have turned up