

Routine Proceedings

the city of Ottawa, the rest being from Oxbow, Shaunavon, and Silton all in Saskatchewan. They are protesting the imposition of the goods and services tax on books and reading.

This is the first time in Canada that this has ever been done. These petitioners call upon Parliament to reaffirm the historic principles embodied in the free status for the printed word by retaining the zero rate in the GST legislation and regulations.

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[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Barry Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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• (1120)

[English]

PRIVILEGE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Raymond Skelly (North Island—Powell River): On November 19 Your Honour commented on the House order to the aboriginal affairs committee on the Oka matter.

The committee meeting last night would indicate that the committee, for whatever reason, is incapacitated and unable to deal expeditiously with the House order.

I wonder if Your Honour might ask the members of each party sitting on that committee to meet informally with the Speaker to explain how they intend to go about carrying out the wishes of this House.

I wonder if Your Honour might also review the minutes of that meeting to determine whether the expertise of your office and yourself might be of assistance in launching this very important inquiry, that really cost Canadian taxpayers \$60 million and tied up one third of the Canadian army.

The matter is important for every member of this House. I know that Your Honour at this point might want to be appraised of the situation in a formal way and offer whatever service that might assist the committee to carry out the wishes of the House.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I had a brief note passed to me earlier this morning about the events of yesterday. I understand there are a series of motions that have been prepared by different members of the committee.

I also understand that there was a tendency on the part of the opposition yesterday, which perhaps could be characterized as a filibuster, so that they were only able to deal with one of the motions that was available to them.

There are some other motions that might settle the situation if members would talk a little less and get on with the job of voting. I think then we might very satisfactorily come to a resolution and get on with the inquiry. The opposition has to bear some of the responsibility for their decision to deal with their motions only, and not be willing to deal with motions presented by other members.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, a number of days ago I had the opportunity of talking about this issue privately with the Speaker for a few brief moments after the issue was raised in the House of Commons.

Might I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the proposition brought forward by our colleague this morning is an important one. Although committees generally operate with their own mandate, it is not true of a special committee. A special committee operates quite otherwise and it can only operate on the premise that it is a creature of the House, and not that it has its own mandate under section 108 because it does not apply to those special committees.

Therefore, I think it is incumbent on the House to ensure that its directions are followed. Of course you, Sir, are the servant of this House and one on whom we count in order to ensure that those things happen.

I refer to Beauchesne's citation 621, as well as Standing Order 116 of this House to back up the claim that I am making. Perhaps the best way to ensure that the House order is followed would be for Mr. Speaker to have an informal meeting, which was mentioned by our colleague from the New Democratic Party. In this way we will not delay the House unduly this morning, or any