

Senator Grafstein: I am suggesting that it is a logical consequence of what you were implying. My question to you is this: Based on your attendance at those many hearings across the country over several months, and based on your own research, did you detect any flaws in this bill that we might, at this last juncture, correct? I am not talking about minor flaws. Are there any significant flaws in this bill or is this bill beyond correction at this stage?

Senator Barootes: As to your last statement that the bill was so flawed it could not be corrected, quoting from the New Testament: You said it, I didn't! To begin with, regarding Mr. Blenkarn, I have not read the article. I presume it was in the *Toronto Star*. I think that is the only paper you fellows read.

Senator Grafstein: I believe it was in the *Globe and Mail*.

Senator Barootes: I have not read it and I do not know what he said, but if he said something with which you agree, then you should go and talk to him about it. We are not talking about that here. We are discussing what we have seen and heard. As for my impressions of the presentations made to us, I think we were told that there were three hundred some odd presentations made, of which two hundred some odd were opposed. I think you should look at those figures a little more carefully. It is easy to make the blunt statement that two hundred some odd were opposed. However, they were not so much opposed as they were presenting a lobby for their sectoral group, for their industry, for their chocolate bars or their biscuits or whatever business they were in, to point out that there were some anomalies that applied to them that they felt should be corrected to make the tax fairer for them, to make their industry more profitable, or to make it more profitable for them to sell tourist packages in Minneappolis for people to come up and fish in northern Saskatchewan. Those people did not come and say, "Throw the bill out."

Senator Olson: Yes, they did. They sure did.

Senator Barootes: They did not, even though our friends tried to persuade them repeatedly, with all kinds of intimidation, that we should do away with the bill. The fact of the matter is that many people presented a view that they thought the bill could be corrected or improved and that the Senate was to present their views. I say to you, as our Prime Minister has said, and as the Minister of Finance recently said, if there are anomalies or inequities or difficulties when the bill is passed and put into operation, then there will be an opportunity to have them corrected. They may not need amendments. Some of them will only need regulatory or administrative or interpretive changes. So I say to you that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have said that they are willing to examine some of these things once we get it into operation, and I think that is the reasonable way to do it. That is the way other new taxes have been implemented and corrected in the past when there were difficulties.

Senator Grafstein: Senator Barootes, you really did not respond to my narrow question.

Senator Barootes: I did my best.

[Senator Barootes.]

Senator Grafstein: Let me just repeat it, and if your answer is the same, then we have struck an impasse. I understand what the Prime Minister says. I understand what the Minister of Finance says. That is not my question. My question is for you as a member of this chamber. You are called upon, in this chamber of sober second thought, to review legislation by the government and to come to a determination as to whether or not this bill needs substantive correction. That is my question. My question is not what the Prime Minister will do in the future or what the Minister of Finance will do in the future. I do not quarrel with that. I am just asking you whether or not, based on your study of this bill, you see any substantive defects that could be corrected now. That is all.

Senator Barootes: I tried to answer before and I will try it again, but this will be my last try at it. I am doing my very best to tell you that I agree with the thrust of the bill, its principle and its intent, which I know you understand. The intent is to have a broad-based, lower-rate consumption tax to help our exports and our industries to compete, and ultimately to increase the economy of this country by \$9 billion over a period of time, and I am fully in support of that. The little corrections that different little groups may want, if there are any, should be done only after the tax has been tested, and that may come to be.

Hon. H. A. Olson: Honourable senators—

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Olson: —it is fairly late so I will be brief.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Olson: I thought that would get some response. I hope that honourable senators, particularly the ones who have been here only since we were swamped, will listen carefully.

There are all kinds of criticisms that can be made of Bill C-62, because as we travelled across the country, we found, if not hundreds then certainly scores of inconsistencies and injustices which I heard members of the Conservative Party who were there on the committee say needed to be corrected; no doubt about it. I am not going to deal with all of them. I am only going to deal with the ones that apply to the amendment that is before us now, and I will try to confine my comments to that area.

Honourable senators, why we have to make a plea now is that tomorrow afternoon at 5:45 we are going to be called upon to vote as to whether or not we are willing to take heating fuel, in all its forms, out of this iniquitous tax.

I think that most of us who have been here for some time—and perhaps even the new senators—understand that, above everything else, the job of the Senate is to try to identify and then correct regional disparities.

Senator Grafstein: Absolutely!

Senator Olson: People talk about sober second thought, and I think that is a good thing, too. If the House of Commons, its committees and legislative process have made a mistake, when a bill comes here we can have another look at it, a sober second thought. I have not seen that practised as much during