

members whose sole purpose, frankly, was to obstruct the proceedings of that committee.

This went on for a considerable period of time until an eventual resolution was reached. Following that, in spite of continued offers and requests by the chairman and myself, that party which is now complaining about lack of opportunity for reasonable debate refused to accept the majority proposal, to present an alternative proposal or to suggest somehow how we might proceed to deal with the business of the committee in a timely manner.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Churchill on a point of order.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the member who is speaking tell the truth to the House. He knows that we did make counteroffers, and that was for the committee to travel across this country and hear witnesses from coast to coast to coast in each province and territory. That was offered to the government and it would not listen. We wanted the people to speak. We wanted the people to come to the committee. The hon. member should tell the truth.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): What the hon. member is saying is debate. The hon. member for Edmonton Northwest has the floor.

Mr. Dorin: Mr. Speaker, I am relating to you and other members my viewpoint, my opinion, which frankly is the truth. Other members may have their own opinions and may dispute that, but that is up to them.

I think the whole issue casts a negative light on the question of whether or not members are independent members of committees who can make their own decisions or whether they must feel they are going to have—

An hon. member: You are voting independently from your caucus?

Mr. Dorin: Absolutely. I do not need any instructions. I have been involved with this issue for a long time and consistently supported it, going right back to the previous election. In case hon. members wish to know, my election brochures during the last campaign contained a commitment to sales tax reform and moving in this direction. This was included in the documentation that I distributed to every household in my riding. I made that

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perfectly clear, and I answered questions to that extent during the election campaign.

I find it very strange indeed opponents or opposition members suggest that it is independence when a committee tests the limits of its authority, which is somehow acting in defiance of the government or doing something which is not particularly popular with the minister. When a committee tests its authority in measures that happen to support the government, that is suggested to be autocracy.

It seems to me that opposition members cannot have it both ways. From time to time they have to rise in their places and take a position which may not necessarily always be popular within their own caucus.

Do we see them do that? No, we see them coming in here and participating in their publicly announced and acknowledged tactic to obstruct Parliament, to prevent Parliament from doing its business. The only way we can get on to have any kind of debate at all on this bill—because we know what happened at second reading stage, no debate was allowed because of the tactics of the NDP—is to proceed with this motion, vote this motion, pass it, and move on to time allocation.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Finance went over the line as far as I was concerned. For many years I have said publicly that for me he is one of the most respected members of this House, so respected that many months ago when we heard that he was going to advance this goods and services tax a group of us got together and tried to come up with a constructive alternative. I must say to all members of this House it is a tough job to come up with a constructive alternative. I believe, as all of us do, that the only way we can advance debate is by coming up with alternatives.

For months a group of us worked together with tax experts from across the country. We even consulted Senators Bradley and Gephardt in the United States, Hall-Rabushka from the Hoover Institute at Stanford, Lyman MacInnis, past president of the Ontario Institute of Chartered Accountants, and Thomas Hodgson, President of Central Guaranty Trust in Toronto, the whiz kid of Bay Street. We got together with the researchers at the Library of Parliament and with Statistics Canada which develops modelling systems, some of those same