

of Parliament for Okanagan—Shuswap to adequately represent the views of my constituents.

Mr. Speaker: May I ask the hon. member if it is going to add anything to what has already been put. The hon. member has some knowledge of procedure and knows that there comes a point when sitting in a judicial capacity there is no need to repeat matters. I know the hon. member would want me to ask him to make the usual remarks about putting the usual motion, to be in order, but I think that at this point the hon. member could say he associates himself with the very able arguments that have been given, and not take up further time.

There is a question of fair play in these matters and I must turn to some other members.

Mr. MacWilliam: Mr. Speaker, I fully understand the need for brevity. I did want to present some evidence that is pertinent to the case, demonstrating the fact that my ability to represent my particular constituents in this matter was in fact short circuited, if you like.

I want to present to you evidence of a letter that I had written the Chair of the finance committee sometime back in February, requesting that as a result of submissions that were made to me as representative of the constituency of Okanagan—Shuswap, I appear as a witness before the finance committee on behalf of a number of organizations that had submitted to me written briefs outlining their concerns about the goods and services tax. I therefore wrote the chairman of the finance committee to appeal his consideration that I appear before the committee to provide such evidence.

In that regard I had a letter of return from the Chair of the finance committee thanking me for my letter and essentially going on record as saying that if I as the member of Parliament for Okanagan—Shuswap would provide the committee with a written summary of concerns, he as Chair of the committee would do what he could to ensure that the submittees of the concerns that were submitted to me would hopefully be allowed an opportunity to appear as witnesses.

I in fact carried out those requirements by providing the committee with a summary of those submissions. Although I have essentially honoured the request of the chairman of the finance committee, his actions as of last

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night essentially denied the final opportunity to allow presenters from my constituency to appear as witnesses.

Mr. Speaker: I must advise the hon. member that this aspect of his complaint has been dealt with many times in this House and I have to say that that is not something on which the Chair can intervene.

There may have been other constituents that, as a consequence of this order or as a consequence of some order in the distant future, it is decided by the committee that they do not appear. But that is not a matter in which the Chair can intervene.

The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier. I would ask him to wrap up his remarks very quickly. I know he will co-operate.

Mr. Jean—Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I have not even started yet, but I am going to wrap them up quickly. You can be sure of that.

I do hope we do not create a precedent here that just because one gets a letter in to the Speaker one can speak on the question of privilege before the House, which was the original question put by the member for Burin—St. George's. Just because one sends a letter to the Speaker does not mean that he gets into the debate on that question ahead of other people who may have a valid point of privilege or discussion point to make in support of his point. I hope there is no precedent because if there are, Mr. Speaker, I think we should come back and have a debate on how we are going to proceed.

Mr. Speaker: I must make a comment. Until I have heard the member who applies on privilege, I cannot decide that. However, I am much heartened by the hon. member's comment that it ought not be a precedent.

Mr. Gauthier: I come back, Mr. Speaker, to the original question we started debating about an hour and some minutes ago put by the member for Burin—St. George's, at which time he made three very good arguments. I thought the wisdom of his arguments very convincing. He made the point that no authority was given to the chairperson to deem the motion before the committee withdrawn.

Second, he said that there was no authority in the chairman's role to disallow points of order at that time. Third, he said that the chairperson had no authority to disallow debate on those points.