

Government Orders

Speaker's ruling is sought on that dispute as well as some others.

Mr. Gauthier: Why didn't you say that on March 12?

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the second point to which I refer comes to what my hon. friend suggests. He asks why we did not do this on March 12. I think it is fairly obvious. We wanted to demonstrate that we are reasonable.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, come on.

Mr. Cooper: Hon. members laugh, but that is the truth.

When the Senate sends a message in the first instance, as tradition and experience would tell us, the first message is usually sufficient to deal with the issue. We wanted to yield where we could, to state our purposes to the Senate in specific terms by motion and a message back. We thought our motion, which was adopted by this House, would be understood by the Senate to be just that.

An Hon. Member: Oh, come on.

An Hon. Member: Say that with a straight face.

Mr. Cooper: I say it with a perfectly straight face.

We gave the Senate, by way of message, a reaction to the amendments. We did so to be reasonable, to express to the other House what we felt would be the case on this side and what we thought and hoped would be their reaction. Obviously, the circumstances changed. They did not accept our response to the message. They have now come back with a similar message and we are back to the same thing.

This brings me to the final point that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands raised in his argument where he said that a point of order, in order for it to be raised, must relate to something before the House. I am paraphrasing, but that is what I heard the hon. member say.

First, we are dealing here with an attempt on the part of the government to be reasonable in a response to a message from the Senate.

Second, when that reasonable response is not accepted by the other place, we then consider what we believe to be fundamental principle arguments to be addressed. Is the issue before this House? I argue that in fact it is.

What we are responding to is the message. The message has been sent from the Senate. It is an issue before this House and, ultimately, after your very important ruling, which does not apply only to the government in this issue, but to the rights and responsibilities of all members of Parliament because our relationship to the other House is a most fundamental relationship that goes back to the beginnings of parliamentary democracy and the whole idea of a parliamentary system.

The issue is clearly before the House. It is a very important issue. Mr. Speaker, your ruling is one that is very important to all of us. I hope the arguments you have heard on both sides have helped you to address the issue.

The arguments we have made demonstrate that just as those amendments would not be acceptable in this House, neither should they be acceptable by way of message back to this House.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think there is any need to continue the argument. I am indebted to the hon. parliamentary secretary for summing up in the careful way he has.

I shall bring my observations to the House as soon as possible. I do not think you can expect them tomorrow morning. I am going to take some considerable thought on this matter.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Perrin Beatty (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-51, an Act to amend the Income Tax Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Pierre H. Vincent (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the measures taken in Bill C-51—

Mr. Speaker: Before the hon. member begins his speech, I think it would be appropriate to explain why he is dressed that way.