Point of Order

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the members' attention the presence in the gallery of Dr. Dalibor Brozovich, Vice President of the Republic of Croatia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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PRIVILEGE

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B)

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege arising from the tabling of the supplementary estimates on Friday last. Attached to my copy of the supplementary estimates was a press release. The press release says, and I quote from it: "Parliament will be asked to approve expenditures that include $257 million to prepare and plan for the goods and services tax".

Over the weekend I took the time to read the supplementary estimates, as the government House leader recommended we do, and I found on page 32 a provision under the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs for the establishment of a goods and services tax consumer information office for a total estimate of $19,496,000. I found on page 52 of the supplementary estimates an additional $14,305,000 under the Department of Finance for its advertising campaigning to convince Canadians that this is a good tax. I found on page 84 of the supplementary estimates the sum of $202,987,000 under the Department of National Revenue (Customs and Excise Department) for preparation and planning for the GST. For the taxation portion of the same department, on page 85 of the estimates, there was shown an additional $67,254,000. On page 88 of the supplementary estimates, I found an additional $40 million for the Department of Public Works for preparation and planning for GST accommodation. On page 100—

Mr. Speaker: I do not know whether the hon. member wishes to debate the supplementary estimates, but I am sure that there will be an opportunity to do so.

I am having some difficulty in finding the point of privilege. Perhaps he could get to the point.

Mr. Milliken: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but the last one was an additional $21 million. The $21 million in supply and services was for cheques. Now if all those figures are added up, it comes to $365 million for the goods and

services tax. The minister's press release says it is $257 million. I submit there is a very serious discrepancy.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Milliken: His press release is misleading the public.

Mr. Speaker: I have to say to the hon. member that that is a matter of debate and is not a question of privilege.

An hon. member: Oh, yes.

Mr. Speaker: It is a matter of debate, not a question of privilege.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, with great respect, the press release is not correct.

Mr. Speaker: There is a debate about what is correct or not correct in a press release. That is the question of debate.

The hon. member for Shefford on a point of order.

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POINT OF ORDER

THE BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS—REQUEST FOR A RESEARCH FUND

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, because it has been several months since my colleagues in the Bloc québécois and myself sent a request to the Chair and to the Board of Internal Economy about our rights and access to a research fund.

I am convinced that the fact we are not heated the same as other members, although there is a precedent for doing so, makes it difficult for us to function as efficiently as other members. And now, four months later, Mr. Speaker, I must say I find it hard to accept that not only are we deprived of adequate research but our former parties still receive funding allocated on the basis of our membership. Both the Liberal Party the Progressive Conservative Party continue to receive this funding.

Mr. Speaker, these funds should be put in trust immediately, because I believe access to research is a privilege to which all members should be entitled. I therefore find it very difficult to accept that it takes four months for the Board of Internal Economy to send us a reply, when we realize that in Quebec City, the four members of the Equality Party who represent a much smaller constituency—