

Routine Proceedings

[English]

FINANCE

TABLING OF THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to Bill C-62, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act, the Criminal Code, the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff, the Excise Act, the Income Tax Act, the Statistics Act and the Tax Court of Canada Act, with amendments. The report culminates over two years of work with over 70 amendments.

In doing so, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the committee clerk, Marie Carrier, the table officers and the committee officials for their tireless efforts. On behalf of all the parties of this all-party committee, I would like to thank also the hundreds of witnesses from all across Canada, from every province and region in Canada who appeared before the committee, as well as those thousands who offered submissions and briefs to the committee over the past three years.

[Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.]

• (1210)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I recognize the hon. member for Kamloops on a point of order.

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POINT OF ORDER

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I am sure it is no surprise to you or to the House that I want to rise at this moment to draw to your attention our serious reservations about the receivability of the report of the Standing Committee on Finance on Bill C-62.

On Wednesday, March 21, the Speaker very kindly provided us with an opportunity to raise our concerns about the proceedings in the finance committee on the previous evening. I do not think a more detailed information from my point of view at this point needs to be given about that particular series of events, but I would like to ask for your generous time, Mr. Speaker, in order to make a very critical point.

I do think, however, now that the bill, the committee's report, and the failure of the committee to pronounce itself on the chairman's conduct are all before the House, that we must address what happened and get some guidance from you, Mr. Speaker, as to what this means for all future committee proceedings.

The finance committee held hearings and meetings on the goods and services tax both before the bill was introduced and after the bill was introduced. Many things have happened in that committee, many things which would make a procedural purist shudder, I might add.

Today, I think we can afford to ignore virtually all the procedural hiccups in that committee, with one exception: the ruling by the chair to impose time allocation in committee.

I do not think we can have an easy decision, as the chairman made it, in terms of something that we can accept.

I admit that he was faced with an extremely trying and tiring circumstance at that time, but I do not think that the provocation was justification for this extreme step. I do not think it is particularly relevant to the question I am asking you to review. Can a committee chairman invoke time allocation or closure in committee? Frankly I consider this to be one of the most important procedural questions that all members, including yourself, will have to consider in our term of office.

The finance committee chair mentioned last week the dilemma that faced Speaker Brandt before he invented closure more than 100 years ago.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member has brought another point to this debate, but I think the Speaker did rule on it previously. If there is something different, we could have a look at and then we could come back and rule on it.

I would hope that the hon. member would bring it to a conclusion right away.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, if I may make the point, the Speaker indicated that while the matter was before the committee, it was a matter for the committee to resolve. This matter is now before the House.

Mr. Andre: No, it is not.