

is that it would have to be an absolutely clearcut decision, without any grey areas, if there were a precedent that would put the committee in the position where it could not debate and decide an issue that is so important to the people of this country in terms of tax relief. I cannot conceive that the rules were ever considered to be used in a way that would deny discussion by the members of a committee with regard to a matter of such importance.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Chairman, I wish to supplement briefly what the hon. member has just said. If Your Honour were to give effect to the argument of the Minister of Finance—I think he presented it with tongue in cheek—it would mean that if on second reading of a bill the question was put, the House voted in favour of second reading and the bill was sent to committee, each and every clause in the bill could not be the subject of attack by the committee. That would be a preposterous situation. The committee is certainly entitled to examine with care each clause and decide whether it wants to accept it or change it.

I would point out to the Chair that under the new procedure which has been adopted in the reverse of this situation time after time in standing committees, votes are taken on individual clauses of a bill and the government may be sustained, as it is from time to time, but that does not prohibit our coming back into the House at report stage and moving an amendment in precisely the same terms. Surely that is of some significance. There must be some relationship. If we can do it in one instance, we should be entitled to do it in another. It would be a very grave injustice to deny this committee the right to express its views on the amendment put by my hon. friend.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, I support the position just taken by the hon. member for Peace River. It is good to have him back.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The amendment moved by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham on February 6 was an amendment on second reading of the bill. It was in these words:

—this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-49 because it fails to provide for a further 5 per cent reduction in personal income tax in 1975 and subsequent taxation years despite unprecedented government revenues and the resulting overtaxation by the government.

That was recognized as a reasoned amendment. Thus, it was not an amendment to the bill itself. The House expressed its opinion at that time on the question of whether we should proceed with second reading with or without that change. I do not see where that governs the proceedings of the House from that point on. As a matter of fact, we are not now in the House; we are in committee of the whole.

As Your Honour knows, many times a bill is sent to a standing committee and something that has been argued for and defeated on the floor of the House is nevertheless moved as an amendment in the standing committee. If there were any question about the right of a private member to move a reduction in taxation, that would be a different point. However, it has been pretty well established over the last several years that although private members cannot move an increase in taxation, they can

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move for a reduction in taxation. Therefore, I think Your Honour should disregard the argument proposed by the Minister of Finance and allow this amendment as being in order.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, because of the importance of this matter, Your Honour may want to reserve decision on the admissibility of this particular amendment. I can say that if Your Honour were to see fit to admit it at this time, I doubt very much that we would make much progress for the rest of the day.

● (1240)

An hon. Member: He is threatening a filibuster.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, as the mover of this motion may I say that I hope you will put the question. We believe there is something very fundamental at stake here. My amendment would mean from \$60 to \$150 for each taxpayer in this country. The minister is simply stalling for time rather than allowing us to go to a vote.

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Deputy Chairman: Order, please. If there are no further comments on the point of order, the Chair is prepared to make a ruling at this time. I thank hon. members for the contributions they have made. The point raised by the Minister of Finance has been fully taken into consideration. It is quite correct, as he suggests, that the substance of the second reading amendment and this amendment at committee stage are similar. There is a different aspect, however, because of the stage at which the bill is now being considered. The vote taken at second reading stage was on the principle of the bill, that principle being stated in general terms. Now, in committee stage, we are considering items specifically in the clause by clause study and therefore the committee has the right to consider again a particular clause of the bill.

For the information of the hon. member, the Chair has been guided in this regard by May's eighteenth edition which at page 483 reads:

The various stages through which a bill progresses... are intended by the practice of parliament to provide so many opportunities not only for consideration, but also for reconsideration. Such stages may be taken to include the passage of any necessary financial resolution. Thus an entire bill may be regarded as one question which is not settled until it is passed. And hence no objection can be taken to an amendment on any particular stage on the ground that it raises again a question decided on an earlier stage.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Deputy Chairman: Shall the amendment to clause 77(2) carry?

Amendment (Mr. Stevens) negatived; Yeas, 37; nays, 50.

The Deputy Chairman: I declare the amendment lost.

Mr. Hogan: Mr. Chairman—

The Deputy Chairman: Shall clause 77 carry?

Some hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. Hogan: Mr. Chairman.