

**Mr. Speaker:** May I inform the House that prior to the resumption of debate because of the ministerial statement consideration of Government Orders will be extended by 57 minutes this day. Therefore Private Members' Hour will begin at 5.57 o'clock.

**An Hon. Member:** On my duty day.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the duty day of the Hon. Member, yes, and he knows where to take his complaint.

Resuming debate, please.

**Mr. Cassidy:** Questions and comments.

**An Hon. Member:** There are two minutes left—

**Mr. Speaker:** This is a good time for me to make my point. The Hon. Member wishes to complete a period of time for questions and comments which would remain were the Hon. Member present who had spoken. The fact that he is not here, in my view, when the House resumes debate after a normal interruption like lunch or overnight or a week means that the time dies.

**Mr. Gauthier:** On a point of order—

**Mr. Speaker:** That is a ruling.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** Mr. Speaker, I make it a point of privilege.

**Mr. Speaker:** Let me withdraw. I appreciate that hon. Members want to make some comments. What I will do for the moment is I will indicate to Members that that is certainly my intention and those who wish to communicate with me on this matter are free to do so. I think it more properly may be a matter for some conversation as opposed to a point of order structure here. Therefore, I invite the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) and the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) to come and see me on this question. Resuming debate.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** A question of privilege, if you would allow, not on your first point, but on your last point.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** I would like to bring to the attention of Your Honour that I am getting a little bit, not annoyed, not suspicious, but concerned about these private discussions that could take place between Members and Your Honour outside of the framework of the House. It has happened a few times and we have a very good point—

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member is making his point but it is not a question of privilege. If the Hon. Member would like me to rule, I will rule.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** Mr. Speaker, I don't want you to rule, but—

### *Excise Tax Act*

**Mr. Speaker:** Exactly. I take it that the Hon. Member did not wish me to rule. I am therefore simply resuming debate.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, just on that same point because I think I misunderstood you. Did you say that you had rules on this question or that you were reserving your ruling?

**Mr. Speaker:** I thought I was very clear. Let me make it clear to Members now. The report that brought in the proposal for questions and comments is absolutely clear on this point that the purpose of the question and comment period is to question or to have back and forth comments—

**Mr. Prud'homme:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, it is. The report is absolutely clear on this point.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** I don't agree.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, it is. Would someone please bring me the report. It is at the Table. I have had it waiting for this purpose. If Hon. Members wish to push me on this I am perfectly prepared to cope with it right now. I quote from the report:

The ten minutes set aside following a member's speech should be used to question the Member or to comment briefly on the speech in a manner strictly relevant to the content of that speech.

I will find the next quote:

"Your Committee envisages that the exchanges that would take place would be sharp and short.

The quote continues:

Furthermore, the Chair should control the interventions to promote a series of exchanges to enliven the debate.

I took it on reading that that it was dead clear that the intention of the 10-minute period was to allow a back and forth relationship between a person who had made the speech and those who wished to question and comment thereafter.

**An Hon. Member:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Therefore, it is to me not sensible when a debate has been adjourned for a normal period of time, overnight or a lunch period or a week or whatever, to allow the questions and the comments to continue in the unavoidable absence of the Member who made the speech.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** But any Member can leave the House and there can be no questions.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Therefore, I rule that questions—

**Mr. Prud'homme:** You may rule, that doesn't mean we agree.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is absolutely historically true for every Speaker. Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Tupper).

On a point of order, the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy).