

*Excise Tax Act*

431, where, discussing the functions of the committee of ways and means he says, at the bottom of that page:

It is the function of this committee to impose rather than repeal taxes.

The bills here are for a reduction, which is to that extent a repeal of taxation, and therefore they come within the scope of that citation.

Bourinot then discusses the function of the committee of ways and means and the rule that a new tax must be imposed in that committee. In the course of the discussion he makes it clear that the requirement for a ways and means resolution preceding a taxation bill exists only when the bill or the proposal is to increase taxation or to impose new taxes or to bring a new group or class of taxpayers within the liability for existing taxes. Quite clearly, in accordance with the outline given by the Minister of Finance on Friday night, none of those results would follow from these bills. I refer Your Honour and my hon. friends opposite particularly to Bourinot's discussion of this matter on pages 505 and 506, where he discusses the type of case in which it is not necessary to have a resolution of the ways and means committee before introducing such a bill. For instance, at the top of page 506 he says:

A bill merely declaratory in its nature, and involving no new charge, need not originate in committee of the whole.

And of course the committee of ways and means is a committee of the whole. He continues:

Neither is a committee necessary in the case of bills authorizing the levy or application of rates for local purposes by local authorities acting in behalf of the ratepayers.

Then he goes on with a list of the exceptions, and about half way down the paragraph he says:

Nor does the rule apply to bills imposing charges upon any particular class of persons for their own use and benefit.

Nor to bills indemnifying members for penalties they may have incurred for violation of an act.

And then this is the particular sentence in point:

Nor to bills having for their object the diminution or repeal of any public tax provided such bills do not affect trade;

And of course these bills do not affect trade; they are specifically for the repeal or reduction of a public tax, the income tax on the one hand and the excise tax on the other.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Will the hon. gentleman give us the reference which he has just made?

[Mr. Fulton.]

**Mr. Fulton:** Page 506, Bourinot's fourth edition. Then if there were any further question—if there was any doubt left that the only time you need a ways and means resolution is when you propose to increase a tax, Bourinot points out at page 507:

Bills consolidating and amending statutes are frequently brought into the house with clauses containing charges on the public revenue, but it is only when these clauses impose new burthens that it is necessary to consider them first in a committee of the whole.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of those authorities, both English and Canadian, it is my submission that the course proposed to be followed here is both strictly within the rules of the house, and not only within the rules of the house, but designed to present to the house every opportunity which the house should have to discuss the taxation proposals being made by the Minister of Finance.

It is only if the Minister of Finance were to be introducing a budget which varies or enlarges the financial scheme laid before parliament and approved by parliament last spring, that it would require a committee of ways and means and a resolution in that committee. Where, however, as in this case, the minister has made it perfectly clear that he is operating within the limits of the budget already approved by parliament, and merely seeks to reduce taxes in certain particulars—and can do so and still meet the requirements also approved by parliament—then in such a case, and that is the present case, no resolution or committee of ways and means is necessary.

I therefore suggest to my hon. friends, Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness, that they withdraw their objections and allow the house to proceed with the bills before it so the public may at the earliest possible moment obtain the benefit of the reductions proposed in taxes.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Might I ask a question of the hon. minister, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I should be fair and say I have two questions.

First of all, if the minister contends that the Minister of Finance is not introducing a budget but is merely working within the framework of the budget brought down last spring by Mr. Harris—and I do not go along with this premise, but if this is his premise—does it not then follow that the proposals of the present Minister of Finance are upsetting the balance of ways and means established by Mr. Harris' budget last spring? On that basis is it not therefore necessary that we go into committee of ways and means?