

be held on this major change to public policy in these areas.

Or when the the goods and services tax goes to the Senate—God forbid that it ever makes it to the Senate—again, would they not feel an obligation to do what the government refused to do, hold hearings in the province of Quebec. This is almost pitiful when you think that the government says they are interested in public participation and yet not a single day was set aside for hearings in one of the largest provinces in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary rises on a point of order.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the hon. member with great care and although he is making an interesting intervention as to what the Senate may or may not like to do on any number of bills, I do not see that it has any relevance to the point of order before us which deals specifically with whether or not the Senate has the right to amend financial bills. It has been clearly demonstrated that Bill C-21 is that type of bill.

Mr. Riis: My hon. friend was out of the House when I commented that the government, I understand, has already accepted certain amendments. Having already accepted certain amendments, now seems to be a rather awkward time to be suggesting that they ought not to accept any further amendments. I sense some weakness in the logic of that approach.

However, I suppose technically one could say that the Senate does possess the right under the Constitution Act to do what it has done. Whether it has the ethical right to do that is another question. It seems to me that it places you, Mr. Speaker, in a very, very difficult situation. From time to time all of us in this House probably question the things that are done in the Senate. We doubt the wisdom of some of the judgments made. But surely it is not the role of the Speaker of the House of Commons to comment on the messages received from the Senate.

I submit that the Senate can send any message to the House of Commons it wants and then it is up to the House of Commons to decide how it is to reply. Surely it ought not to be left to the Speaker to decide what comments from the Senate are appropriate and others that are perhaps not appropriate.

Point of Order

I want to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the issue before us today has far-reaching implications in terms of the future role of the upper House. Since we did not have an opportunity to reflect on the very thoughtful comments of the government House leader—and similarly I might say the very thoughtful comments offered by the member for Ottawa—Vanier—and considering the implications of the decisions that you, Mr. Speaker, are being asked to rule upon, that we set this aside and return, perhaps tomorrow, after members have had an opportunity to reflect clearly on the very thoughtful presentations made by both sides and add more suggestions for Your Honour to consider.

Mr. Speaker: I am going to accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Kamloops. Over the evening or at least following the House today other hon. members may want to assist the Speaker further. I know the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands may wish to. But in the interest of the accommodation of the House, it seems to me that the hon. member for Kamloops has made a very sensible suggestion.

Copies of the hon. House leader's argument which was carefully put together and is well referenced can be in the hands of hon. members and I shall return to the House at a time appropriate to hon. members and we will complete the debate. It does not have to be decided this afternoon and hon. members would know why I would not decide it this afternoon in any event.

I am going to accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Kamloops which I think is helpful to the House and we shall see to other matters.

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• (1630)

EXCISE TAX ACT

NOTICE OF ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER REPORT AND THIRD READING STAGES OF BILL C-62—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: While I am on my feet, I think I should refer to the hon. Minister of Finance's intervention in giving notice of time allocation and the objection taken to that a few minutes ago.

Objection has been taken on the basis that the matter was not before the House. Some reference was made to an earlier precedent. If the hon. member goes back and takes a careful look at that precedent and what I said, we were not even at Orders of the Day. In this case, we got to Orders of the Day. I gave a long ruling on the motions that are now before the House at report stage and following that ruling there was some discussion. It is true