

against the GST when there were legitimate alternatives at their disposal.

Another point is that within that same meeting yesterday the member for Longueuil, during the course of the proceedings in the finance committee, said that the police should be called in to end the interventions by opposition members. This is a clear indication—

Mr. Speaker: He may have said it. I do not know that that helps me very much. There may have been many things said in the committee. There is no suggestion in what I have heard so far that if that were said it amounted to a threat that the police should be called in. If that is the point of the hon. member's reference to it, that might or might not be a serious matter. I do not want it pursued if it is just a comment in argument or even in jest.

Mr. Rodriguez: It is a comment *en passant*. It was made to indicate the mentality which led to the frustration of the majority within the committee. That frustration led them to seek ways and means to bring discussions in the committee to an end, in my view in an unparliamentary fashion.

In conclusion, I want to say there are fundamental principles that are paramount to maintain the integrity and legitimacy of this place. These are that the tyranny of the majority cannot silence the voice of elected representatives of the citizens of this country. Members must be guaranteed that their privileges will be protected and not be violated arbitrarily so they can carry out the duties for which they were duly elected.

I want to emphasize that in fact it was not as if government members on the committee were bereft of a solution to their problem. They had a legal solution to the problem. I think that is key and crucial. It was not as if this band of six opposition members had taken away from them all other options with which they could legally bring the filibuster to an end. They chose not to end it. That is a question that bothers me. It does not frustrate me, as you said, if I am irritated. It did not irritate me. It did not inconvenience me. However it saddens me that what we have had in my view is the trampling of democracy.

The Standing Orders do not provide for the chairman of a committee to adjourn a meeting arbitrarily. An adjournment motion must be put properly before the

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committee. A committee chairman cannot take up his gavel and say: "I adjourn the meeting." That is not provided under the rules. These were all exhibited over the last two or three weeks within that committee.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, should you find that there is a *prima facie* case of privilege, I would ask that the matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Elections and Privileges.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway seeks the floor, and I will certainly recognize him. He too was a member of the 1984 committee. I know that he will not mind me reminding him that both of us were there and both of us remember the events very clearly. Perhaps neither of us need to be reminded of them in too much detail this afternoon.

I would ask the member who is an experienced member and an able lawyer to deal with any points that have not yet been made or to illustrate very briefly what points he indicates to me are perhaps the most pertinent in the argument that we have had.

There is no need to go through all the facts again. I think I have those. I assure hon. members I will look very carefully at the proceedings.

• (1610)

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I will certainly attempt to be brief and not to cover ground that has already been covered.

I do believe that we are dealing here with a very important and very fundamental question about the rights and privileges of all members of this House. I appreciate your injunction that it is only in exceptional circumstances that the Chair will intervene with respect to proceedings that have taken place in committee. I appreciate the statement of the Chair that in those rare and exceptional or, to use the words of the Chair, severe circumstances there must be some recourse for members of this House.

I would submit, with respect, that this is one of those rare circumstances in which we as members of this House must appeal to the Chair to review with care what has taken place and to find that there has been a *prima facie* breach or privilege in order that the ramifications of the chairman's dictatorial actions in the committee last night be considered by the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.