

Government Orders

not necessarily mean good decisions. They are wrong-headed decisions. As a result, winds of despair, disillusionment, and discontent are blowing across the land.

I believe that if we ask Canadians how they really feel, they would feel that our Prime Minister is destroying our country. He certainly is discrediting our country in terms of the traditional international reputation we have had as peacekeepers, certainly dismantling those critical institutions that made Canada different. We have seen it as a result of the privatization rampage, the deregulation paranoia that the Prime Minister and his government has imposed upon the people of Canada in an effort to dismantle what makes Canada great.

I want to simply say that those pessimistic about the future which now the newspapers tell us on a daily basis include investors, industrialists, large and small business people, consumers, right across the country. It does not matter where you look now—east and west, north and south, men and women, young people, old people—they all have lost confidence in this government.

In closing, I want to say that we could go on with a long, long list, unfortunately, pointing out how the Prime Minister and this government have failed Canada at this very critical point in our history.

I will leave that to others because it is so woefully evident. It is so obvious. It is so well known. I simply want to say that I think that it is appropriate now that the Conservative backbenchers particularly listen to their constituents, do what their constituents want them to do and ask the Prime Minister to resign, call an election and go to the people.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I want to reflect upon some comments that my colleague and my friend from Kamloops has made. He has made some very good points in terms of the loss of faith and a loss of trust that Canadians across this land from Victoria to St. John's have demonstrated in this government.

I want to tell you a little bit of a story because when my colleague for Kamloops and I were busy way back just prior to two years ago today, during the heat of the election campaign, we were working together during part of that campaign. We tried as candidates at that time to raise the issue with our constituents in the Okanagan—Shuswap and throughout Kamloops that this govern-

ment was intending to bring down one of the most massive tax grabs in the history of this country. We spent quite a bit of time trying to raise this as a major issue in that election.

When the government replied to those accusations, it said: "What tax? I don't see a tax. Do you see a tax?" Lea and behold after the election was done and over with, and after the free trade debacle was finished, along comes the GST.

My colleague for Kamloops has reiterated the point precisely. It is this duplicity that this government has with respect to its hidden agenda and the duplicitous nature with which it treats Canadians. No wonder he Prime Minister's popularity is lower than that of Mr. Ceausescu's, and look at what happened to him.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacWilliam: The comment has often been made in this House that there are no alternatives to the goods and services tax. I want to ask my colleague for Kamloops, with his knowledge of finance and matters financial, whether or not there have been alternatives proposed to this government over the past year with respect to alternatives to the goods and services tax.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I want first of all to thank my parliamentary colleague for his thoughtful question and simply say that I do remember during the election campaign asking my Conservative colleague in that election, Russ Cundari, in meeting after meeting if he wanted to say anything about the government's plan to introduce a consumption tax. Don Blenkarn, the chairman of the finance committee, at least had the courage in Toronto to say that that was what the government's plans were. Immediately the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance jumped on him and said that he did not know what he was talking about and that that was wrong.

I do not remember this being a major issue during the campaign. That is why when the government says it has a mandate from the people of Canada to impose this mean, cruel, brutal tax, that is absolutely false.

Let me, however, respond to the question. The question was: Are there alternatives? I think to be fair, that is where we differ from our friends in the Liberal Party. They are going to set up a committee to examine alternatives to the goods and services tax and to various aspects of tax reform. I think that is their position. We do have an alternative. We have presented it publicly. We