

Routine Proceedings

These are constituents from Spaniard's Bay, Bay Roberts, Harbour Grace, Clarke's Beach and that area of Conception Bay north. These people are very concerned about the goods and services tax adding to the already dismal burden of Newfoundlanders, with the various economic downfalls and dismal outlook that we have for the next year or so.

They are particularly concerned because, as middle and low income earners, they spend over 90 per cent of their incomes on consumables. They are looking at higher income Canadians who spend less than 50 per cent, and they really feel this is unfair. It is another addition to the already 31 taxes that have been levied since 1984.

These petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present petitions on two different subjects.

First, these are petitions which have been signed by hundreds of residents of Burnaby—Kingsway and elsewhere in British Columbia, concerning a tax by the Conservative government on railway passenger service in Canada.

They point out that railway passenger service, as carried on by VIA Rail, is essential for many Canadians and has been a part of Canada for more than 100 years. They express their concern about cuts by the Conservative government of over \$500 million in its operating grant to VIA. They point out that the effect of these budget cuts is to eliminate one-third of our national passenger railway system.

They therefore call on Parliament to maintain the existing VIA Rail network, to upgrade VIA equipment and to guarantee VIA sufficient support to carry out its mandate to provide passenger service.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, the second group of petitions, again signed by a wide variety of residents of British Columbia but particularly signed by hundreds of residents of my constituency of Burnaby—Kingsway, are petitions relating to the proposed goods and services tax, proposed by the Minister of Finance.

The petitioners point out that this is an unfair form of taxation because of its lack of regard for the taxpayers' ability to pay. They urge the government to come to its senses and reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax.

They urge the Senators in the other place to wake up and take their responsibilities seriously on the goods and services tax. I am sure they would urge that. That may not be explicit, but I am sure it is understood. They finally urge the government to cease its proposal which would shift the tax burden on to ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of through real tax reform. I hope that the government would heed the plea of these constituents and put an end to the goods and services tax.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by numerous residents of the province of Newfoundland.

I may say that the petition was gathered by my honourable and gallant colleague from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception and I believe that many of the persons who have signed this petition are constituents of his and they object to the goods and services tax.

They point out in their petition that this government has increased taxes 31 times since it has assumed office. As he so eloquently put it a moment ago, they, as residents of Newfoundland, have suffered unduly at the hands of this government that they look forward to the return of prosperous times with the election of a Liberal government in the forthcoming federal election. They call upon Parliament to reject the goods and services tax.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I too rise, pursuant to Standing Order 36, with a duly certified and correct petition both as to form and content.

This petition is from hundreds of residents of Newfoundland, from Carbonear, Harbour Grace, Spanish Point, Gull Island, Victoria, Rooche's Line, Spaniard's Bay and Bristos Hope.

They call on this Parliament to urge the government to withdraw the vicious goods and service tax, a tax which is going to wreak havoc on the economy of an already depleted region of Canada and will impose a very serious and grievous burden on those who are unaccustomed to paying an additional tax on services.