

Routine Proceedings

I commend my colleague from St. Boniface for the efforts he has made in this area.

Mr. Speaker: I would remind hon. members that remarks at the presentation of a petition should be brief and should not get into the realm of debate.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 50 Canadian citizens asking Parliament to rescind the goods and services tax on books, magazines and newspapers.

In their petition they point out that the dissemination of the printed word is a cornerstone of democracy. They also point out that prior to the goods and services tax, going right back to 1867, there has never been a tax on books in Canada. They ask that this tax be rescinded.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition today signed by many Canadians. It is a petition concerning the tax on reading. They indicate that since Confederation there had not been a tax on books, magazines and newspapers until as we know, this government brought in the GST on reading. They call upon Parliament to have this tax cancelled.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions that I wish to present this afternoon.

First is a petition from constituents from Ottawa South asking the Government of Canada to consult with the people of Canada by way of a national referendum on matters of constitutional amendment.

Presumably legislation adopted in this House yesterday will contribute to satisfying the request of these petitions.

[*Translation*]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition, signed by residents of the riding of Ottawa South, who call upon Parliament to consider the possibility of reinstating the Court Challenges Program which gives all Canadians equal access to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Your petitioners deplore the fact that the government has abolished the Court Challenges Program.

[*English*]

CANADIAN OLYMPIC TEAM COLOURS

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition signed by a great number of people from Mississauga objecting to the purple and white trim on the Canadian colours worn in the Olympics last winter in France and praying that the government makes sure that Canada's team be represented in the Canadian colours of red and white in Spain this summer.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 from many people from the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta reminding this government that since Confederation we have never taxed books. They are begging and humbly asking to reaffirm this historic principle embodied in tax-free status for the printed word by returning the zero rate in GST legislation.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from many Canadians submitted to me. It states: "Don't tax books, don't tax reading. It is a bad policy, bad for business and it is bad government. It is contradictory, completely so, to our fundamental democratic principles. Books and reading materials have never been taxed in this country." The petitioners ask that it be abolished and be abolished now.

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I continue to receive petitions from Canadians who are asking the government to reconsider its position on the Court Challenges Program and pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the opportunity to present these petitions to the House.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by residents of St. Catharines asking for a referendum of the people binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government.