

*Routine Proceedings*

regular House leader meetings because we were interested in the comments by the Prime Minister.

There were two ad hoc meetings. They were not regular patterned meetings of all the people present. We had a meeting later in the afternoon around five o'clock with the House leader. If there was an undertaking given to the House leader of the NDP, I was not aware of it, as I was not there. I think that the process would be much better served if there were consultations with the opposition parties in chairing such important committees. I think there has been a tradition for House leaders to consult with other House leaders as to who should be the chair.

We do not object to the government wanting to chair that committee, but we would like to feel that the subject matter is so important and of such great interest to Canadians, that all parties will agree to a consultative process before the chair is named or elected by the majority. Whether the government likes it or not, it is going to have its way. It is going to win this debate because it has eight members; we only have four and the NDP only have two.

What we are pleading for, Mr. Speaker, is understanding, co-operation, reasonableness, intelligence and possibly some wisdom.

**Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West):** Mr. Speaker, I think one thing we all understand is that the choice of chairperson is limited to the 15 members who were just named and approved by the House. That happened about 10 minutes ago. I would be quite happy myself, or my House leader, to meet and consult with the opposition. I see it as an electoral process which will take place no sooner than Monday, and maybe not until Tuesday or Wednesday of next week, but there will be a normal organization meeting when the election of a chairman will take place.

I would assume some vice-chairman will be glad to talk about that. I think it serves the nation well if we are all comfortable with the way that that committee proceeds and with the chairmanship of it. We would be pleased to try and facilitate it with our colleagues.

We have only known the entire membership in any kind of an official way for about 10 minutes. Maybe we are not behind time yet in terms of consultations.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Petitions.

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**PETITIONS****GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East):** Mr. Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 36 to present—

**Mr. Hawkes:** Was the motion carried?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Order, please. Yes, the motion was carried.

I do not wish to argue with the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, but I recognized the hon. member on a point of order after it was carried. The hon. member for Edmonton East on petitions.

**Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East):** Mr. Speaker, the last thing I would want to do is disrupt the proceedings of the House.

I rise under Standing Order 36 to present a pride of petitions signed by a total of 1,452 Canadians, most of whom are Albertans and most of whom are Edmontonians who sort of call into question the assessment of the hon. member for Mississauga South, as reported in today's papers that popular opposition to the GST has died. It has not. That popular opposition is still out there and growing every day. These papers are testament to that.

**Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly):** Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition from my province, the province of Quebec, indicating as my colleague from Alberta has said, the popular opposition to the GST is not dying down, in fact it is increasing.

I have 3,639 names here from places such as Matane, St. Hyacinthe, Chambly and elsewhere in the province of Quebec.

[Translation]

**TAX BENEFITS FOR NORTHERN AND ISOLATED AREAS**

**Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am tabling today a petition from Lebel-sur-Quevillon, in Quebec, concerning the recommendations of the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Areas.

Lebel-sur-Quevillon is without question an isolated area, and that is why your petitioners consider the Brunelle recommendation to be discriminatory, unfair and inefficient with regard to the purpose of the North-