

Routine Proceedings

Cove, Catalina, Little Catalina, Melrose, and the Port Union area.

These constituents are very concerned about the high unemployment rate in Newfoundland which is the highest in the country, and that they need 14 weeks, as it now stands, to qualify for unemployment insurance. They are not very happy with that. They want it reduced to 10 weeks by the variable entrance requirement, as has been done very year since 1976.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to introduce the variable entrance requirement without delay, but immediately—now.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 on behalf of a number of constituents from Clearwater, British Columbia, Logan Lake, British Columbia and Kamloops, British Columbia, who simply cannot believe that the government plans to impose a special tax on reading material, as a result of the goods and services tax decision.

They point out that in a democratic society, the printed word is a cornerstone of democracy and to tax it would make us the only country in the world that does so. They say forget that.

On another topic, Mr. Speaker, some of my constituents from Kamloops point out their opposition to the goods and services tax. After pointing out a whole set of reasons why they oppose the tax, they ask the government to reconsider proceeding with it, but to implement instead real fair tax reform.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): I have the honour to present four petitions from quite a number of people from the great riding of Vancouver East.

These people continue to say that they are opposed to the goods and services tax. They reject the current proposal of the government. They want reform of the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations.

The petitioners want to ensure that if and when there is a broad public consensus on the sales tax measure, this reform will not be an opportunity for the government to impose a massive tax grab. They want the government to cease with this proposal which will shift the tax burden

on to ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax, instead of through real tax reform.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty on behalf of citizens of Saskatoon—Humboldt and the area surrounding Saskatoon—Humboldt to present a couple of petitions which state categorically their opposition to the goods and services tax. They call upon the government to reject the tax now.

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, once again I am honoured to rise in the House pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of my riding of Kent. The petitioners request that the government withdraw this despicable GST bill and axe the tax.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 36, I have two sets of petitions I would like to bring to your attention. The first is a petition which notes that the Government of Canada has introduced charges that will reduce homekeeping services to veterans and substantially increase the cost of long-term care.

These veterans also note that they have already given service to this country and should not be targeted by these measures. The petitioners call upon Parliament to reject the budget measures that deprive veterans of proper services and increase their financial hardship.

• (1510)

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): The second set of petitions, Mr. Speaker, relates to the GST on books. We are in receipt of hundreds of petitions which bring to our attention the fact that books have never been taxed in this country and that for the first time this government wants to apply the GST to magazines, books and newspapers. This is a very nefarious tax. It hits the printed word which is the cornerstone of democracy, culture, education and a literate and productive society.

We will be celebrating Literacy Day next week. I call upon this government to reconsider this tax on reading, this tax on intellectual understanding of the society in which we live.