

Government Orders

committee, question witnesses who come to seek better ways to avoid the impact of GST and ask them why they do not oppose it as they should, we will have a situation where debate will be ended. The bill will be reported back to the House, and people who have been elected to represent their constituents will not have been heard as thoroughly as they should.

I totally sympathize with those people who want to use every means possible to try to block legislation, but in this place the majority eventually gets its way. I am one of those who believes that before the majority gets its way the minority must have its say. That is not happening at this point.

In closing, I hope that when these matters of dealing with changes in the RRSPs, how they are administered, how the thresholds are set, how people can take advantage of them and whether they favour some people more than others come before committee we will have input from Canadians generally. I hope parliamentarians who are interested will come forward and provide constructive amendments as to how best we can serve the people we are elected to represent.

In the context of the goods and services tax which is still very much on everyone's mind, let us consider the impact of this change on Canadians who are able to provide for retirement, how we should be helping those who cannot use this mechanism, where this mechanism is unfair, how it can be improved, how tomorrow's budget will affect Canadians, and how we must oppose any propositions in that budget that are contrary to the best interest of Canadians.

Although it is cumbersome and sometimes minorities feel terribly oppressed by majorities, I hope we will have an opportunity for full and open debate, at least in this place. We have very little control over what goes on in the country. That is becoming more and more evident as the reaction to the goods and services tax continues to grow. Surely we have a responsibility as well to speak out on these issues and go on record as to what we disagree with, what we agree with, and how we think we can improve proposals put forward by the government. If those constructive suggestions are not accepted by the government, it would obviously be our duty and our responsibility to vote against the government proposals. We have no reservations about doing that unless the

problems with the proposed legislation by the government are resolved by amendment.

I look forward to this matter being dealt with in committee. I am hopeful that all members of the House will allow for open debate, come forward with suggestions, and make sure that all of us work together to try to make this legislation as effective and as useful as possible to all Canadians.

Ms. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, that was rather curious debate on this particular bill. It sounded like a rationalization for a failure to have real alternatives to the GST. It seems rather curious that the member focused the majority of his comments against the New Democratic Party, which is not the party that has put forward this bill. It is a rather strange way of proceeding.

I can understand the kind of motivation that has propelled this member to make his speech in this manner, because we in the New Democratic Party do have alternatives to the GST. The kind of alternatives that we have and the kind of opposition that we have exercised in the finance committee have been very strenuous. That is because we are absolutely opposed to the GST, unlike the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party thinks that in the next election it will win by default and that by not proposing real alternatives it is going to sneak in because of the unpopularity of the Progressive Conservative government.

We should make it clear that we are firm in our opposition to the GST and to this RRSP legislation, that we have the courage of our convictions, that we are not prepared to debate these things, and that we are opposing them. That is the route of real democracy. Our constituents right across Canada are telling us that they want this bill stalled by whatever means. Even this afternoon in the finance committee witnesses told our members that they appreciated the role they were playing in stalling this legislation and to continue it with all their energy.

I would like to ask a question of the member who has just spoken. Why has the Liberal Party not posed real alternatives to the GST?

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, the question of proposing an alternative to the GST is falling right into the trap of the government. My friends to the left never really get too interested in what they would do as a government, because as the hon. member for Esqui-