

Routine Proceedings

per cent of the people opposed the goods and services tax and that only 15 per cent supported it, about the same relationship I suppose in terms of the support for the government generally.

The petitioners say that surely, if 85 per cent of the people oppose the goods and services tax, the government ought to listen and back off from proceeding with the tax and consider real tax reform as an alternative.

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I present a petition on behalf of the people of Snowdrift in the Northwest Territories with regard to the native people of Canada, specifically the Mohawk Nation.

They indicate that they expect the Government of Canada will immediately act upon its authority and responsibility and deal in a just manner with the struggle of all aboriginal people in Canada to have their land claims and rights properly addressed. Inaction on the part of the federal authorities will only continue to antagonize race relations in Canada and to provoke dangerous and ignorant acts of racism.

I present this on behalf of the people of Snowdrift who feel very strongly, as do other native Canadians.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions that I would like to place on the table, pursuant to Standing Order 36. They are signed by residents from the great province of British Columbia who are opposed to the goods and services tax.

Whereas there has been the imposition of some 31 taxes since the Conservatives have come to power, these petitioners are opposed to this new general goods and services tax because it will cause serious and unfair hardship to low and middle income Canadians and will provide an onerous burden on small business.

Each of the petitions requests the Government of Canada, both in the House of Commons as well as the Senate, to withdraw the goods and services tax as soon as humanly possible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I have a large number of petitions to table today and they are about the fact that the government wants to tax books.

Mr. Speaker, we know that taxing reading or books is tantamount to promoting ignorance and that the government's proposed tax on books, newspapers and magazines is regressive in the extreme.

Your petitioners—hundreds of them—maintain that the free distribution of printed matter is a cornerstone of our democracy, our culture and our education. They claim that an educated and productive society will be adversely affected by a provision that would put a tax on books, something unheard of in Canada so far. Mr. Speaker, these people strenuously object to the GST being applied to books or to anything else.

[*English*]

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present, on behalf of a number of persons from Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Vancouver, Burnaby, and New Westminster in the province of British Columbia, and a number of other towns and cities in the lower mainland of British Columbia, a petition calling upon the government to withdraw the goods and services tax.

The petitioners point out, in particular, that the imposition of this tax will create an onerous burden on small business. They also point out the unfair hardship it will mean to low and middle-income Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, it makes one wonder, with all of the petitions from all parts of this country, why the government and members supporting the government are not giving more attention to the concerns of that 85 per cent or 90 per cent of Canadians out there who want this tax dumped and want some real honest to goodness tax reform brought in. When are you going to do it?

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition with regard to the goods and services tax.

Even the modest amendments which are being put forth by the Senate, such as not putting the GST on books and certainly not on funerals, the government is again refusing to even consider these things. I think the