

retaining the zero rate in the GST legislation and regulations.

I think, Mr. Speaker, you would agree that it is a very important issue and, with your permission, I want to table that petition on their behalf.

CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition, pursuant to Standing Order 36, from a number of people from British Columbia who are concerned about the level of child poverty in Canada.

The petitioners point out that the number of children living in poverty has actually increased over the last number of years and are calling upon the Government of Canada to introduce a comprehensive bill of rights for children as a first step to eliminating child poverty in our country.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, on another matter, it is my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of a number of employees of CP Rail from Kamloops who are asking the government to reconsider its regressive, backward, and silly decision to curtail VIA Rail service in the country.

The petitioners are asking the government, not only to restore the service, but actually to improve the service that we knew when we had the full VIA compliment. They are asking for new investment in a first rate passenger rail service in the country, such as any country the size of Canada ought to expect.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, lastly, I have the pleasure to present a petition on another topic, the goods and services tax, on behalf of petitioners from Kamloops. This brings the number almost to 21,000 people who have spoken out against the goods and services tax. The petitioners are simply asking the government to come to its senses and listen to the 80 per cent of Canadians who oppose this tax.

If this is a democracy, the government should pull the tax, or if my friends in the Liberal party were also listening in terms of democratic procedure, they would ask their colleagues in the Senate to stop it.

Government Orders

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

IMMIGRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Kim Campbell (for the Minister of Employment and Immigration) moved that Bill C-77, an act to amend the Immigration Act, be now read a second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the amendment to the Immigration Act before the House today has a clear and definite purpose. It is designed to improve our ability to help those refugees and immigrants who require our assistance to settle here.

I would like to emphasize that refugees selected overseas are the main users of our transportation assistance and admissibility loan program.

These refugees are selected overseas in accordance with the government's annual refugee plan, or based on the sponsorship of private groups or family members in Canada. These are, understandably, the people most in need of our services.

Since it was first established in 1951, hundreds of thousands of people have used this fund to finance their medical examinations and transportation to Canada. Without this fund, many of them would never have been able to settle here and Canada would have been much poorer for losing their talents and genius.

The Transportation Loan Program has served us well in helping us meet our overall immigration objectives. It has improved our capacity to reunify families, helped us provide a safe haven for refugees, and eased the admis-