

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Prime Minister is quite simple and it is one that everyone would like to ask him: When will the government realize that the public wants to say what it thinks of the GST?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I would assume the leader of the New Democratic Party would not be suggesting that having bellowing, screaming, and yelling for hours on end and not permitting questions to be dealt with in a sensible, rational fashion is somehow an expression of democracy. It is more an expression of tyranny, of anarchy.

• (1430)

I would like to quote to the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party from the text *Procedures for Meetings and Organizations* edited by Messrs. Kerr and King with a forward by Dr. Koester, former distinguished Clerk of this House, which states: "The presiding officer is responsible for safeguarding debate by allowing complete and adequate expression of views and putting the question to a vote when those have been aired sufficiently."

After three years the views have been aired sufficiently.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of members of the Indonesian House of Representatives led by the vice-chairman, Mr. Soekardi.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister may not be aware, in view of the answer given by the House Leader for the government, that the time allocation measure that was proposed to the Standing Committee on Finance was moved while witnesses were still being heard. The roaring and yelling that was referred to was not taking place at all. In fact, the 30 hour long

discussion that took place was as a result of the introduction of the time allocation motion by the Conservatives.

Does the Prime Minister agree that the government should impose closure on second reading in the House on the goods and services tax, the most important measure since the income tax legislation of the 1920s? Now we have time allocation in the Standing Committee on Finance, and members of Parliament on his side are stating that closure will be imposed as well on third reading, stifling debate not only in the country but also in the House of Commons on this very important tax measure. Does he agree with that?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, every attempt was made, as we usually do in this place, to get some agreement from the opposition as what would be an appropriate time period for ending discussion. The opposition absolutely refused to give any commitment. Therefore, at some point in time it behooves the chairman to bring things to a vote and indicate when that will be.

In this regard the chairman took a position exactly parallel to that taken when the Liberal government was in office in June, 1984. The chairman did nothing but what the member's party had established as a precedent some six years ago.

[Translation]

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Prime Minister. Since we know that a number of Conservatives, both here in the House and across the country, are opposed to the proposed goods and services tax and that the Premier of Alberta and Mr. Kindy and many others object as well, is the Prime Minister prepared to allow a free vote on the goods and services tax bill? A free vote would be one way to do it.

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, we have had several votes on the GST, including a vote in November, 1988, since the GST was introduced before then. The people of Canada, if they had the view the hon. member suggested, had an opportunity to say so at that time. This government clearly has a mandate. This government was duly and properly elected.