

democracy, it will be imposing a tax on those very tools that permit us to do just that.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I too am honoured to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 on behalf of 50 Canadians who are concerned about the imposition of the GST tax on books and other printed word. It has been the cornerstone of our country, of our democratic society, that the printed word be disseminated as widely as possible and without tax.

I humbly submit this petition asking Parliament to reaffirm the principles of democracy and allow no tax on the printed word.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to rise to present a petition in this House concerning the goods and services tax. The many Canadians who have signed this petition are from the city of Toronto. They are opposed to the tax, and in particular insofar as that tax is applied to the printed word.

Like many other members of this House, I plead with the government to change its obstinate approach to this bill, agree to changes that will make the bill more sensible and reasonable for Canadians, although I find the whole idea of the goods and services tax unreasonable, as I am sure these petitioners do, and call upon the government, as they do, to reconsider the goods and services tax and for the Senate of course to reject this bill.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, as we have been doing for months and months, I come before you with hundreds of petitions once again from the general population from east to west and from the north, who are extremely concerned about the tax on reading. They consider this tax to be a tax imposing ignorance on our population with a terrible mortgage on our future. We should do everything possible to encourage reading, and not to tax reading. The petitioners call upon this government to reconsider the goods and services tax on books, magazines and literature and to stop being so stubborn, change its mind and move to remove the tax.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my pleasure to introduce similar petitions to those that have been introduced

Routine Proceedings

already. These come mainly from Toronto. They are opposed to the GST as it is related to the printed word. It is highly hypocritical of this government not to accede to this particular request and see that the GST is not applicable to the printed word.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a couple of different petitions this afternoon. The first one is from people who take objection to the GST being applied to magazines, books and newspapers, going totally against Canadian precedent. I think it is important that people realize that there are a lot of people in this country who do not have easy access to libraries where they can inform themselves and that the purchase of printed material is important to them. I ask on their behalf that the government consider dropping the application of the GST to the printed word.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): As well, Mr. Speaker, I have petitions from people in my riding who take exception to the government's budget proposals for veterans. I think that in this perilous time in which we live in this world, where we are sending our Armed Forces to serve in the Middle East, that we assure the Canadian public that we treat our veterans with the greatest respect for the service that they have given.

The petitioners on this petition humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject those budget measures that deprive veterans of proper services and increase their financial hardship.

• (1530)

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to rise, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present a petition on behalf of many constituents from the city of Toronto.

They have noted a very timely action by the Government of Quebec on the decision not to impose a sales tax on printed matter and other learning material. They call upon the government to consider that action as a precedent, to act on it, and to follow up on it.

A GST or any kind of tax on the printed word and learning material that profligates the essence of democracy is truly unproductive, as is, for example—and they have noted it—the language of the Minister of National