

[English]

These 2,038 Canadians opposed the GST in 1990, and they continue to oppose it today, as do most Canadians. Only the cynical Conservative government continues to support this heinous and regressive tax; a tax that has sown the seeds of Canada's economic misfortune. I fully agree with these 2,038 Canadians when they demand the abolition of the GST.

## VETERANS AFFAIRS

### PRESENTATION OF PETITION

**Hon. Jack Marshall:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to present a petition containing 169 signatures from the Ottawa Branch of the RCAF Prisoners of War Association. The petitioners are from Ontario, Saskatchewan—indeed, from across Canada.

The petitioners avail themselves of their ancient and undoubted right thus to present a grievance common to your petitioners in certain assurance that your Honourable House will therefore provide a remedy.

This petition concerns the series of films entitled *The Valour and the Horror* which include *Savage Christmas: Hong Kong 1941; Death by Moonlight: Bomber Command; In Desperate Battle: Normandy 1944.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON SUBJECT MATTER OF BILL C-62 ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Oliver, seconded by the Honourable Senator Comeau, for the adoption of the Ninth Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications (Subject-matter of Bill C-62, An Act respecting telecommunications), presented in the Senate on 22nd June, 1992.—(Honourable Senator Lynch-Staunton).

**Hon. Mira Spivak:** Honourable senators, because time ran out last June, when the report of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications on the subject-matter of Bill C-62 was tabled, I did not have an opportunity to speak to it. Therefore, I wish to make a few brief comments today.

Before doing so, I wish to commend the members and the chairman of the committee, Senator Donald Oliver, for the very competent manner in which they conducted the business of the committee; and I commend the chairman in particular for his unfailing courtesy, both to the witnesses who appeared before us and to committee members alike, for his talent in bringing out the best in everybody and for his guidance of the work that produced this excellent report on a very important piece of legislation.

I most strongly support that thread of discourse in the report which holds that the telecommunications system does not exist to serve the business community only, although in that capacity it is, and will continue to be, the engine of growth for the Canadian economy, and will ensure our survival in the international marketplace.

In the words of the report, the telecommunications system must facilitate the movement of information and the exchange of ideas which promotes national unity, regional development and international competitiveness. The telecommunications system, then, must serve the needs of individual Canadians, and government policy must be designed to protect the public interest.

I also support the following statement in the report:

The Committee is firmly of the view that any shift to greater reliance on competition must not be at the expense of . . . affordable and accessible basic telephone service. It is essential that the crowning glory of monopoly telephony, universal service, not be compromised in this transition. Hence the need for legislation such as Bill C-62 which creates a framework within which regulatory decisions will have to be made to preserve the best of the past while allowing market forces greater room for future growth and innovation.

The committee stance favouring openness in decision-making, its concern that transparency is not to be found in all parts of Bill C-62, and the recommendations for improvement in the proposed bill are an important contribution, as are the strengthened recommendations relating to the individual right to privacy.

With regard to policy objectives, which are in clause 7 of the bill, I find myself at variance with what is contained in the report on two counts. I refer, first, to the recommendation that references to sovereignty, politics and culture be removed. I think that the original wording, that telecommunications has an essential role in the maintenance of Canada's identity and sovereignty, is not only true, but vital, and should stay in.

As well, the idea that a communications system should serve to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political and economic fabric of Canada makes a clear distinction between means and ends, and provides clear guidance to those responsible for the implementation of the legislation. The orderly development in Canada of a telecommunications system must serve these policy goals.

Second, although many witnesses complained, with justification, that these policy objectives were in many instances inconsistent, one with the other—for example, competitiveness at the domestic level may require a number of industry participants, while competitiveness at the international level may require significant concentration at home—I do not think the committee's model, as proposed in the report in Appendix I, would improve the situation as much as the model proposed by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, one of the groups that appeared before the committee.