

The family is a pillar of our nation. I urge the government to act now to ensure that our tax system does not weaken it.

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GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Liberals really oppose the 7 per cent goods and services tax and I would like to explain why.

Did the Liberal senators vote unanimously in favour of the GST when leave was sought to introduce it in the Senate? No.

Did the Liberal senators vote unanimously in favour of the GST when it was introduced in first reading?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

An hon. member: Yes, they did.

Mr. Riis: Let me try it again, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Riis: In summary, let me say that the Liberal senators did not vote against it at first reading. They did not vote against it when they sought leave to introduce it. They did not vote against it at the second reading stage.

They then rang the bells all Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. But, Mr. Speaker, the Senate does not sit on Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday. I think they could have kept the bells ringing but, of course, Jean Chrétien ordered the now minority number of Liberal senators to return to the Senate when they are—

• (1410)

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member's time has expired.

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[*Translation*]

THE SENATE

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal senators have systematically blocked bills that were tabled in the Senate after they were passed in the House of Commons.

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This attitude is a contradiction of our system of government, in which the ultimate responsibility lies with the elected representatives in the House.

This is a matter of democracy and concerns the elected government's right to conduct its business on behalf of the people it represents.

The problem is not the GST but the fact that non-elected Liberal senators are depriving an elected government of its right to govern.

The Senate is now blocking three other money bills, adding a total of \$8.3 billion to the deficit.

Some hon. members: Shame!

Mr. Della Noce: These bills, including the GST bill, are the main components of the government's economic plan for Canada.

This paralysis of government business caused by a non-elected Senate is a denial of the principles of our parliamentary system.

Mr. Speaker, the will of the elected House must prevail. We have a duty to defend our system of government and we shall do so.

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[*English*]

LITERACY

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada, in partnership with the Canadian Library Association, is honouring individuals in our communities with a very special award for their outstanding contribution to promoting literacy.

This year, 1990, is International Literacy Year and it is therefore fitting to present Canada's Literacy Volunteer Awards. This is an important program in the literacy movement for it recognizes those Canadians who give of their time and effort to help others.

Nominations can be made at our public library boards which will then select the recipients to be honoured. This is the time to praise and to commend those persons who are contributing so much to stamp out illiteracy in Canada.

Literacy is vital to our future and we must all work toward ensuring that forthcoming generations have the opportunity and pleasure of knowing how to read.