

*Adjournment Debate*

we must pay off the federal debt and the deficit. Mr. Speaker, just imagine all the money we are spending just to pay the interest on the interest on our debt. If we had only 50 per cent of that money to hand out to poor children, I think there would be fewer, if any, poor children left.

We must get at the root of the problem. As I see it, if we go on, it will get even worse, because we will have no money to redistribute.

In her question to the Prime Minister on October 2, she mentioned the world summit on children's rights. I think it was the first time the United Nations, in fact the first time ever that a children's summit was held and an international declaration was drafted on the survival, protection and development of children, with a corresponding plan of action. We are committed to putting in place a national action program to help children. Mr. Speaker, I think much remains to be done. This is one of the issues I am very much concerned about. There are children who are mistreated, but there is also the very distressing question of child sexual abuse. And now, for the first time, there will be a national office to co-ordinate the activities of all federal departments with a mandate in this area, and I think that is a good sign. We need the help of all parties in this House to find long-term solutions. Mr. Speaker, in concluding I think the hon. member will agree that the best way to find those solutions is to get the money, from income tax and other taxes, and redistribute it to the poor children of this country.

[English]

## GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I have participated in the late show, so correct me if I get off track here.

• (1910)

My purpose in speaking this evening concerns a question that I put to the Minister of Finance on Friday, September 28. I asked him why he continued to say that business in this country was basically supportive of the goods and services tax when, in fact, over 90 per cent of the business in this country is opposed to the GST. I was kind of wondering why he kept saying this when it was a fallacy.

The second part of my question was: In light of this current economy, why would he be proceeding with the goods and services tax when the sectors of our business community such as construction, retail and tourism were the sectors that were hardest hit by the GST?

Of course, in his second answer, the Minister of Finance talked about some visitor that he had to his office. He was nowhere near the answer to the question.

I put this question to the Minister of Finance because I am hearing day in and day out, not just from my own constituents, the small businesses in my community, the butchers, the bakers, over 300 restaurants in Broadview—Greenwood, small and medium manufacturers, that at this point in our economy, we do not need another tax.

When even the largest supporter of business, the group that represents the largest 150 corporations in Canada, the Business Council on National Issues, presented its submission to the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, in the initial pages of the representation, Mr. D'Aquino said that by international standards, we already impose a heavy income tax burden on our citizens.

In 1987, almost 40 per cent of all tax revenues raised in Canada came from personal income tax. This was higher than any any of the G-7 countries.

What we have today is a system in our country. The Minister of Finance is really misreading this whole tax problem. The GST has really become the lightning rod, but the real problem is that our fundamental Canadian Income Tax Act with its regulations comprises a document of almost 15,000 pages, rules, regulations, exceptions, exceptions to exceptions. Most honest tax lawyers and tax accounts who represent these businesses will admit to you that it has gone beyond control.

They no longer understand what is going on in this tax act. So, the Minister of Finance, in the middle of a recession is not only ignoring the fact that the fundamental tax act is wrong, he comes along and adds the GST, a goods and services tax which also has all kinds of rules, regulations and exceptions. People are going out of their minds with complication.

In his answer to me, he said—I give him credit for this—that there are elements of the GST that some parts of the business community do not like. That does not, in any way, take away from the importance to the business community and to the economy of Canada for