

## S. O. 31

the 12 Members of Parliament studying Mrs. Proulx's request to grant her the royal clemency.

It seems to me that, after 11 years of incarceration, Mrs. Proulx deserves to live in peace and serenity her final years and I hope, Mr. Speaker, that she will be given that chance. It is really a humanitarian case.

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[English]

## GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

**Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, this week has been declared a national week of protest against the goods and services tax, better described as the grief and suffering tax. Liberals from coast to coast in this big country have given all Canadians the opportunity to voice their opposition to the GST. They have done it in overwhelming numbers by simply picking up the phone and phoning 1-900-720-6052 or 1-900-720-6051. All week this number 1-900-720-6052 has been overloaded by phone calls from thousands and thousands of Canadians from one coast to another saying to this Tory government that this is a rotten tax.

In fact, these phone lines have been so popular two things have happened. One is we added a second line on Wednesday to accommodate the rush—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The hon. member for Sault-Ste. Marie.

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## VIA RAIL

**Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, after having decimated the rail transportation system in this country, the government continues its mishandling of the issue. The government's complaint was that taxpayers could no longer spend hundreds of millions of their tax dollars subsidizing the system. Now there are 300 excess cars of rolling stock in various states of disrepair, but some that could be put into immediate use by Canadian interests to the benefit of Canadian taxpayers. Rather than offering any assistance, VIA Rail has contracted out the disposition of this stock to Canadian and American interests. In other words, the government is asking Canadians to pay again for what is already theirs.

In my community, the single most important tourist attraction is the Algoma Central Tour Train which

requires \$30 million to \$40 million for refurbishing of cars. This would be a golden opportunity for the government to offer one community a tremendous economic lift. I am sure there are others in like need.

I ask the minister to intervene, establish Canadian priorities and distribute this rolling stock to Canadian interests at nominal cost.

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## MEECH LAKE ACCORD

**Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, when people are asked if they have read the Meech Lake Accord, almost 90 per cent of the population have never read it. It is sad to say that many who think negatively about the important unifying accord have not read it.

I hope everyone will have the opportunity to read the article written in *The Globe and Mail* by Gordon Robertson, former Clerk of the Privy Council, entitled: "Dispelling the Myths that surround Meech". He wrote: "Many confident critics appear not to have read the legal documents. They have uncritically accepted the myths and produced a chorus of unverified assertions about the potential disasters the accord will bring".

Mr. Robertson, who was involved in every constitutional conference from 1968 to 1978 shoots down every myth presented. He ends his dissertation with this statement: "The challenge for Canadians is to refuse to be panicked by the myth-makers. There is no injury of any consequence in the accord. There is rather the prospect of great benefits: the end of constitutional deadlock, the lessening of tensions and the chance to return Canada to effective co-operation in the pursuit of real goals of concern to all Canadians—and to the generous acceptance of diversity upon which our national unity depends".

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## VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso):** Mr. Speaker, this is a call to all veterans. Canada, once again, needs you. You have already given much to your country. You have fought for our freedom. You have seen comrades die. Many of you still bear the scars of battle, wounds and disabilities which you will carry to your grave.