

have already been threatened. We know that other members are being bribed to vote for the GST or risk losing precious lifetime pensions.

By not appointing Mr. Waters to the Senate, by stifling debate on the GST, by imposing it on Albertans against the wishes of 80 per cent of the people, and by the chief Whip suggesting an increase now of \$7,000 on their tax-free allowances in times of fiscal restraint to buy anti-GST MPs, this government and the Alberta MPs are doing little to endear themselves to the electorate.

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GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, in Winnipeg this weekend Jean Chrétien continued not to support the fight against the GST. He is refusing to say what he would do if he were the Prime Minister of this country.

We saw the effect of Mr. Chrétien's wavering. This afternoon, only 110 Conservatives showed up to vote for the time allocation motion. They won that by 43 votes and 48 Liberals did not show up to vote against the government. If those Liberals had shown up, then Tory MPs would have had to go home at Easter, hear from their constituents and would have voted against the GST.

As a public service, I wish to give out Mr. Chrétien's campaign number so people can protest the lack of voting by the Liberal caucus. In Winnipeg, the number is area code 204-944-0267, in Vancouver, area code 604-684-8492, and in Montreal, area code 514-844-1990.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister.

We have learned in recent days that some government members are having trouble representing the concerns of their constituents against the goods and services tax

because of the strong arm tactics of the Conservative Whip.

Will the acting Prime Minister allow all government members, including those who have these concerns, to vote freely on this legislation? Will he allow a free vote on the goods and services tax?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member well knows that this government regards this major economic measure, as governments of which he was a part in the distant past regarded major economic measures, as a question of confidence.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the acting Prime Minister.

The report of the special committee on the reform of the House of Commons, the McGrath report, states:

—government members should be able, without fear of retribution, to amend or defeat clauses in bills; make amendments to bills implementing ways and means legislation;—and reject proposed legislation outright.

Speaking in this House, the Prime Minister said:

I was proud to be able to appoint this committee and, as Prime Minister, I endorse all its recommendations.

Given that the Prime Minister himself has endorsed the right of government members to vote without fear of retribution and even oppose government legislation, why won't the government announce today that it will allow a free vote of its members on the goods and services tax legislation?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition takes considerable liberties with the McGrath report and indeed with the traditions of Parliament which he well understands in regard to questions of confidence.

He will also remember that when his former colleague, the former member of Parliament for Westmount, had serious disagreements with a matter of fundamental policy in that party, he found it within himself to act in an honourable way and to dissociate himself from the Liberal Party caucus. That is the tradition of this place.