

Government Orders

If we add 7 per cent to that \$1,500, we get an idea of some of the regional disparities we are seeing, not just in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory but within each one of our provinces. In some of the Atlantic provinces such as Newfoundland, which are fairly small in comparison to some of the others, there are major regional disparities. All these people will be hit with that 7 per cent tax.

I would like to turn away from the Northwest Territories for a moment and consider the south of Canada. I happen to live in the riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt and in the boundary country, most of which borders on the United States border. Osoyoos, Midway, Grand Forks and Christina Lake all have border crossings. There is a border crossing in Costan. These areas are all open to the American economy. There is a lot of back and forth as a result.

The Economic Development Corporation of Osoyoos and Area made a submission before the finance committee on September 15. I would like to quote from this to show the effect not just on the communities in my riding but, I suggest, on all small communities and larger communities across Canada that are anywhere within 200 miles of the U.S. border. The submission states:

Clearly, then, one of the major concerns EDCOA has regarding the GST is the impact it may have on the purchasing behaviour of consumers in our community. It is this organization's hypothesis that the GST will significantly encourage residents to shop in the United States, therefore, significantly hurting local retail businesses and the economy.

This organization believes that the likely scenario for the Osoyoos area, and more generally the whole Okanagan Valley for at least all of 1991, is a significant and damaging increase in the volume of consumers shopping in the U.S.

The Economic Development Corporation goes on to point out that it believes that in Osoyoos the tourism industry will suffer because of the perception created by the goods and services tax of Canada being too expensive to visit. Even with a rebate plan the tourist will tend to eliminate the destination before even finding out about the rebate provision. Further, the inconvenience of bookkeeping while on vacation may dissuade the tourist from seeking the rebate and engender a negative image of our country. This may decrease the possibility of a return visit and of the tourist communicating positive feelings of our country to others in his home community.

In closing they say that the Economic Development Corporation of Osoyoos and area can report to the standing committee that there is a growing dissatisfaction with the implications of this proposed tax in the Osoyoos area.

The Economic Development Corporation in that small community is working hard to try to get some industry going and some things happening within that community. They look at a future with problems as a result of both the free trade agreement and the goods and services tax in trying to encourage companies and corporations to come in and set up businesses in that small community.

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They are not alone in their fears. A constituent in Penticton writes as follows:

Of course, as necessary, but let's have taxes that are fair, not ones that assist the richer element of our society to get even richer at the sole expense of all the rest of us. There is absolutely no justification whatever for the Mulroney tax grab scheme.

I have a letter from Penticton, from a Joyce Armstrong, president of the New Horizon Committee of the B.C. Square Dance Jamboree. She states as follows:

We all agree that the national deficit must be reduced but this is not the way. Why must it always be the middle or average wage earner, pensioner and poor young people who pay? Many of the young people I talked with had some very good ideas and the seniors are not without opinions. Tell Mr. Wilson not to count us out. We're not dead yet and still have a vote.

That is a caution to this government. Pay attention to what the people of Canada want, or you will not be sitting there after the next election.

I have a further letter from the very town I was earlier talking about, Osoyoos. One Norman Arnold writes about the Prime Minister as follows:

He forgets when he hurts the little people that he is hurting about two-thirds of the voting power of Canada, because there are more of them than there are millionaires.

When he hires 4,000 more employees to staff the offices to run the GST for him, does he realize he will have an additional payroll of about 2M per month or more? How much of this foolishness is going to come out of the GST? In one year alone is he going to reduce the national debt, going at it this way?

A resident of Summerland states her opposition and says that a letter to the editor from one Jack Phillips in the *Summerland Review* expresses some of her feelings on the goods and services tax.