

Routine Proceedings

Rather, because of their volume, representing the feelings of so many Canadians, we were going to try to space them out over a period of time to assist the House and yet, at the same time, do our parliamentary duty. If the Whip for the government had simply allowed me to complete my remarks, we would have made a lot more progress than we have so far in the work of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1120)

Mr. Speaker: Before we proceed, I think I am still correct that the hon. member for Windsor West did not yet present his petition. In the spirit of Parliament, I would not want to see a distinguished member of this place let this slip by, despite the fact that he, of course, on the basis of other duties which he occupies, had to take a part in the recent exchange.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your fairness in this regard.

Actually I have to say, to be fair about it, the petition I was presenting has been accepted by the House because one of the clerks has received it, but now that you are giving me this opportunity I am delighted to rise to my feet to present another petition from a number of people in the Ottawa—Vanier area.

[*Translation*]

—they speak French and they humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: Just to assist hon. members, since there are a lot of petitions we might as well concentrate on what the rules are.

I am reading from the *Annotated Standing Orders*, page 111:

Several conditions apply to the presentation of petitions in the House during Routine Proceedings, the most notable of which is the prohibition on "debate on or in relation to" petitions presented in this way noted in Standing Order 36(7). In 1986, the Speaker issued guidelines which not only reiterated the provisions of Standing Order 36(7), but also invoked the practices which had evolved on the manner of presenting petitions:

When presenting a petition during Routine Proceedings, the Member may make a brief summary of the Prayer of the petition, state the parties from whom it comes and the number of signatures it contains, but may not make a speech or enter into debate on or in relation to the petition. The Member should also indicate that the petition has been certified in order, pursuant to the Standing Orders.

The Members should also note that they will be given the floor only once in a sitting to present all of their petitions.

It has long been deemed irregular for the Speaker to present a petition—

That is not applicable.

I do ask for the co-operation of members, and I make quite clear that there are a great many petitions and that in the interests of those who have signed these petitions we should move with dispatch. We can do that best by sticking to the rules.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 that has been certified correct on behalf of a number of Canadians who point out at some length the unfairness in our tax system.

They are of course concerned with the recent decision to initiate this general sales tax of 9 per cent on every Canadian. They are simply asking the government to have some understanding in terms of the tax burden that citizens already face, the fact that it is so unfair and that this 9 per cent simply makes it more unfair.

That is the first petition.

VIA RAIL SERVICES

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition signed by a number of western Canadians who are very concerned that the government has decided to curtail a good deal of VIA rail passenger service.

Again, I point out at some length all of the reasons that they feel this is a rather stupid idea. They are simply calling upon Parliament to maintain the existing VIA network, and they are calling upon Parliament to ensure that VIA equipment is upgraded to allow them to compete in the transportation market. They want to guarantee VIA sufficient support to carry out its mandate, which is of course to provide passenger rail service in the country.