

Government Orders

Democratic Party should get its position together as to whether it wants to debate this bill or not.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Yes, I believe the Speaker at the time did rule that the hon. member for Okanagan-Similkameen-Merritt would have an opportunity for a question and comment period, provided he was in his seat the next time debate on the bill resumed. Debate on the bill did resume yesterday and the hon. member was not in his chair. Therefore, he loses his opportunity and I will now recognize the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville on debate.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words on second reading of the bill on the GST. To begin with I want to make an appeal to the government back-benchers across the way to listen to their constituents. We do live in a democracy, and it seems to me that in a democracy you are morally bound to express the points of view of the people who elected you to the House of Commons.

I know that at times you have to go with conscience on what I would call moral issues, and I speak here in terms of capital punishment, abortion, and things of that nature. However, on a fundamental tax bill, I am sure that members across the way would agree that they should, to the best of their ability, reflect what their constituents are saying.

I see that my friend from Edmonton has already jumped to his feet and he wants to say a few words. His conscience is bothering him. Edmontonians, I know, are speaking *en masse* against the GST and, for reasons such as this, the hon. member is now running fourth in his riding according to polls that have been taken. I am sure that he wants to get up here and speak on behalf of his people.

It is a long time since I have seen such overwhelming opposition to a government measure as we have seen today. I noticed in the Gallup poll about a week ago that 56 per cent of those who voted for the Conservative Party in November of 1988 are now saying no to the GST, and they are saying no in a very loud, clear, efficient and effective way. I think the time has come when members of the Conservative Party, outside of the two or three

who are very courageous, should start getting up and expressing what their constituents are saying.

Surely the chambers of commerce must know how this affects business in this country. Surely the Retail Council of Canada must know of what they speak when they say it will add millions of dollars per year of extra administrative costs. Surely the farmers of this country must know what they are saying when they say this will add millions of dollars per year in terms of administrative costs and extra book work. Surely the trade unions must know of what they speak when they say that this will drive up the cost of living and make things more difficult for their people. Surely the low-income groups in this country must know of what they speak when they say that this tax will hit hardest the poor people and the low-income people of this country.

Surely members of the Conservative Party in this House who have some intelligence and experience must know that their constituents are saying, "Speak up loudly and clearly against this tax which will hurt the people of this country". We have many intelligent members across the way.

I look, for example, at my friend from Lethbridge who is a long-time member of the House and the Conservative Party. He is a man who speaks his mind and a man who has great admiration for his Premier in Alberta. He has great admiration for Don Getty and tremendous admiration for Dick Johnston, the Treasurer of that province. I know that before this month is out he is going to join other Alberta MPs and will speak out against the goods and service tax because he wants to reflect Albertans in this House. He has tremendous admiration for that Premier and tremendous admiration for the tradition of his Party and, of course, for his constituents. He also has tremendous fear about what the voters in that riding will do if he does not do that. That is why I expect he will be speaking out loudly and clearly against what the chairman of the finance committee calls the gouge and the screw tax in this country.

I know some members of Parliament from Ontario may not feel as strongly. The member for Cambridge comes from a riding where there are a lot more wealthier Canadians. There are exporters and manufacturers and some of those people are in favour of this tax. But I appeal to my Albertan colleagues in particular to get up