

Supply

Canada is taking in opposing this government's measures.

I believe that the minister is wrong in saying, essentially as he has said, that by winning the 1988 election he has a four or five year dictatorship, the right to do anything he wants in Canada. I do not agree with that.

I think that there are clear limitations. The government's job is to persuade the people of Canada that the policies they are pursuing are right. Now you cannot always persuade everybody that what you are doing is right. Maybe you cannot even always persuade a majority of the people that what you are doing is right, but where you have, as in this case, a vastly overwhelming majority of the people opposed to a measure that you are proposing, you at least have to stand back and say: "My gosh, have we got it wrong? Have we got it wrong?" I think they have, and I think that the Senate has support from the people of Canada in defending them, the people, against these measures proposed by the Minister of Finance.

The government has got it wrong. It has crossed that line over which governments in a consensual society must not go. They must always remember that they are put there by the people. They are answerable to the people. Their obligation is to bring the people with them on an issue. The senators are the only ones in this whole government system we have here on Parliament Hill who are actually responsive to the people at this point in time.

What about the minister's credibility? He talked about how his mandate flowed from the 1988 election. Right in the middle of the election campaign the chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance, the member for Mississauga South, put his foot in it as he sometimes does, but he always speaks his mind. He speaks honestly, openly and frankly, something that we would love to have from the Minister of Finance, just that kind of attitude.

He said that if this GST were implemented it would raise about \$10 billion more than the government was predicting. The Minister of Finance chopped his head off so fast that it rolled all the way from Mississauga to Lake Ontario.

We now know that the hon. member for Mississauga South was right. He was right. The minister did not want to tell Canadians what this tax was going to cost them. In

the campaign, sales tax was there as part of the program, phase two of tax reform. There is no question about that. But he was proposing a national sales tax that would be at once visible, fair, and revenue neutral.

That he has a mandate to do this from the people is in question for a good reason. If the people believe that any time they go to the polls they are electing just a dictatorship and a tin-pot dictator, what is the use of having elections? What is the use? If governments are not going to be responsible and answerable to the people who elect them, what is the use of having elections?

Did he bring forward a GST that met the measure of the test that he put himself in the election campaign?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Manley: No, he did not.

Is it revenue neutral?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Manley: No. It is going to reduce the deficit. He said that today. How can it be revenue neutral and also help the government's fiscal situation. I do not understand that one.

Is it visible?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Manley: No. He has changed it so that only if the retailers are really able to comply with that, will they be visible, but they can find other ways. All they are going to have to do is post a notice stating: "By the way, did you know you paid the GST?" The consumer will not necessarily know how much he or she has paid.

Is it fair?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Manley: No. My colleagues agree with me. It is not fair. Is it fair that northerners in the farthest reaches of Canada, in Peace River for example, have to pay the GST on transportation costs that are included in the cost of the goods they buy in those remote territories?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Manley: The MST is a terrible tax. We all agree with that, but at least we can say this for the MST. If goods are produced in Toronto, the person who buys it in Toronto pays the same amount of MST as the person