

That is unprecedented in the history of Canadian Parliament.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Will the Prime Minister, now that he has had a briefing from his House leader, give us and all Canadians the assurance that we will have a full opportunity to debate in this House what is a revolutionary tax measure?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question of sales tax reform, my right hon. friend seems to suggest that it is a bit of a surprise for him. It has been recommended in five major studies for the government, going back to the Rowell-Sirois Commission in 1940.

A new sales tax was discussed in the White Paper on Taxation in June, 1987. From 1987 to 1989 the House finance committee carried out studies. A sales tax reform paper was issued with the budget of April, 1989. Draft legislation was tabled in October, 1989. There were revisions to the GST proposal in December, 1989. Legislation was tabled on January 24. Since that time the Opposition has been engaged in dilatory procedural tactics.

But if the Leader of the Opposition is ready to drop his vexatious and dilatory actions, then we will extend hours and begin debate immediately, tonight, tomorrow, tomorrow night.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance continues his losing propaganda war with these latest pamphlets—slick, biased and incomplete—dealing with the GST. He will not listen to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have signed petitions against the GST.

Since the government is sending out nearly two million of these booklets—and there are four or five to each of the kits—I want to know from the Minister of Finance how many Canadians have requested the pamphlets with which the minister is inundating the country.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's leader has just made the point that there have been a number of petitions

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submitted to the Speaker expressing some concerns about the GST. Surely, my hon. colleague would like to see those people receive a copy of these brochures.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Surely the people in the small business community who have expressed some concerns, some interest and some desire to understand how the GST will affect them will be quite interested in receiving a copy of a brochure which sets out, in a good amount of detail, how the GST affects them, how they should register, how they should collect it, how they will recover the GST from their purchases and how the GST will improve their cash flow from what is the case.

Mr. Marchi: Come on, Mike, even Brian's laughing.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The minister will complete his answer.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I think the opposition parties have made my point for me. On pages 18 and 19 there is a very clear illustration of exactly how the GST will improve the cash flow of small businesses in this country. That is precisely why we want to get this information into the hands of the opposition, as well as into the hands of the small business community.

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, the 80,000 businesses represented by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business do not quite agree with the minister.

[Translation]

My question to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, is that we now know that the propaganda campaign is still on. We know that it is going to cost millions of dollars. Does the Minister still intend to speak taxpayers' money before his bill has been passed by the Parliament of Canada? And now, as a result of this propaganda campaign, will we have an army of tax collectors, the 4,000 new employees of the Department of National Revenue who will go to get the tax from the pockets of Canadian taxpayers? Do you still intend to hire 4,000 tax collectors?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think what the hon. member ignores in his question is the fact that there is already a tax in place