

They are opposed to the goods and services tax and recognize that the government is now trying to tax reading materials, haircuts, diapers, coffins and home heating fuels.

They humbly pray that the government reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax and that taxation be reformed so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition signed by a number of constituents from Winnipeg, Dryden, and Saskatoon, to name a few, who are opposed to the VIA Rail cuts that are taking place.

They are asking the Parliament of Canada to maintain and to upgrade VIA Rail's present national network, not take away from something we already have.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present two petitions to the House, both certified under Standing Order 36.

The first one is regarding VIA Rail. Petitioners from all across the country call upon Parliament to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment, to introduce a passenger train bill giving VIA Rail a firm legislative mandate and to develop a revised costing arrangement with the railroad companies whose track VIA uses.

I think we all know how much Canadian National and Canadian Pacific have ripped off VIA Rail.

NORTHERN BENEFITS

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, the second petition ties in with the debate in this House now for a fairer tax system across the country, not the grief and suffering tax being introduced by the Conservative government.

This is in the regard to the report of the task force on tax benefits for northern and isolated areas released on Friday, October 27.

• (1120)

These petitioners primarily from Crescent Spur and the Prince George area call on Parliament to reject the recommendations of the report and to develop a fair and equitable tax benefit program which recognizes the

financial needs of the people in northern and isolated areas.

We trust the Minister of Finance will hear their words.

EL SALVADOR

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions under Standing Order 36. The first petition relates to the situation in El Salvador and calls on Canada to utilize its membership in the Organization of American States to pursue independent diplomatic policy leading to the full protection of human rights and a peaceful resolution to the conflict in El Salvador.

It is signed by many hundreds of my constituents.

VIA RAIL

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting under Standing Order 36 relates to the cut-backs to VIA and the joining of efforts of the Transport 2000 and Rural Dignity in order to obtain justice and satisfaction to the reinstatement and enhancement of passenger rail service in Canada.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, the third petition relates to the goods and services tax. There is, as you are well aware, broad rejection across this country to this kind of tax reform. These petitioners come from Manitoba and from Ontario.

The final petition is also against the goods and services tax. It relates to the petitioners' awareness that the tax burden is being shifted to ordinary Canadians and is not any semblance of real tax reform.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I too rise under Standing Order 36 to present four petitions today from people from Ontario, central British Columbia and Saskatchewan who are like minded in their opposition to the goods and services tax. They express in their petition that a tax on goods and services is a regressive tax which hits low and middle income earners the hardest and that Canadians are already overtaxed.

This further tax burden could and would adversely affect the economy. They call upon this House not to pass the goods and services tax and, based on broad public consensus, to replace our current sales tax proposals and our manufacturers' sales tax with the kind of tax