

VIA RAIL

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, my topic is appropriate.

The VIA Rail cutbacks recently announced were painful and disappointing to many Canadians. As difficult as they are, I support the minister's approach to both maintain national passenger service and to address the tremendous cost of VIA to the taxpayers.

No matter what we do as families, businesses, or government the costs must be weighed. At a cost of \$5,000 million to the taxpayers over 12 years I agree the changes just had to be made.

People in my riding are insisting on cuts in government spending and I agree with them. To me, our debt of \$350,000 million is a threat to all of us. It must be addressed and not conveniently swept under the carpet.

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PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Quebec the Minister of Health and Welfare threatened that social programs will be jeopardized unless a 9 per cent goods and services tax is implemented. He admits more money was spent this year on reducing the deficit than on social programs. This former Minister of National Defence who was willing to spend billions on nuclear subs now indicates he is willing to reduce the deficit on the backs of pensioners, the disabled, the sick and the unemployed.

Instead of using blackmail threats against the provinces and others who oppose the GST, he should press the government to implement progressive alternatives to reduce the deficit. The government could begin by reducing interest rates, introducing a corporate minimum tax, taxing capital gains 100 per cent, and eliminating unfair tax breaks.

As Minister of Health and Welfare he must maintain and improve Canadian social programs, or he should resign.

[Translation]

S. O. 31

DRUGS

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec—Est): Mr. Speaker, October 3, 1989 was a most important day for the people of Vanier, a community located within the riding of Québec East. On that day, the Vanier Police Department launched a drug prevention program under the honorary chairmanship of Guy Lafleur, a well-known and much-esteemed hockey player. Under the theme "Drugs—No Future", the Vanier police are calling on young people from 5 to 20 years old to join them in saying no to drugs.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative involves activities in schools, social clubs and youth groups. This terrific project brings together a whole team to fight drugs and to educate the young people of Vanier and make them aware of the problems and dangers of using alcohol and other drugs.

Thanks go to the Vanier police, the City of Vanier, the Knights of Columbus and the Nordiques hockey team who are pooling their energies for the health and welfare of our youth!

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[English]

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, the same mismanagement, incompetence and disrespect for Parliament that the Prime Minister has shown with respect to our transportation policy such as cutting VIA, with respect to the taxation policy and the introduction of the GST, both decisions made without consulting this House or the people of Canada, he is now showing on the international scene.

I drew to the attention of this House recently concerns about the Prime Minister's expected decision to join the Organization of American States. Our party has repeatedly requested that he put off making any decision until we have heard from our NGOs and from the people of Canada.

To date, neither the Prime Minister nor the Secretary of State nor the chairman of the standing committee on