

*Supply*

partisan, so bombastic and so vacant of meaning that it would not have been worthy of comment.

**An hon. member:** The Pope has spoken.

**Mr. Manley:** I can see the hon. members opposite agree with me.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Order, please! I will again ask for the cooperation of all the members of the House so that I can hear, and above all that the public can hear the remarks of the hon. member for Ottawa South.

[*English*]

**Mr. Manley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that you are eager to hear what I have to say, if not the members opposite.

I have two real concerns that I would like to express about the situation that we are in today in Canada.

One relates specifically to the resolution that is before us. We are in a period of very significant economic difficulty in Canada. We have a very high rate of unemployment. Many jobs are being lost. Over 1.1 million Canadians are out of work. Even in my area of Ottawa, which is often thought of as being fairly impervious to recession, one of the local workers for the regional municipality social welfare agency told me that his level of case work since last year has gone up with a constant number of workers in his office. It has gone from 90 cases in August 1989 to 130 cases in August 1990. There has been a very significant increase in people seeking the assistance of the social agencies even in the national capital, a fairly affluent area. Consequently, job loss is a very real concern.

The other concern that I have is I think best expressed by the cover story that ran in *Maclean's* magazine about two weeks ago. It said: "How Much Can Canada Take?" I think that is a good question for us to ask ourselves at the present time; how much can Canada take?

As we watch the implementation of the goods and services tax being debated down the hall from us and as it involves Canadians from everywhere in this contentious issue day after day, I see an erosion of our willingness as a people to voluntarily comply with government mea-

asures, particularly government taxation measures. I believe that the real battle over the GST for the government opposite is not what it went through in the House of Commons. It is not what is occurring down the hall in the Senate. The real battle for the compliance with the GST is going to be at the level of whether or not Canadians actually do pay the money they are asking them to pay, if and when this tax is ever implemented.

• (1800)

I have been very vocal and very clear in the reasons for my opposition to the GST. Our system of taxation does require voluntary compliance and, in failing to consult and to consider the views and concerns of the Canadian people in implementing this tax, this government runs a risk of undermining the integrity of our entire system of taxation by provoking in our people a tax revolt such as we have never seen in Canada in the past.

We have to look at the credibility of the minister as part of the problem that underlies the government's situation at the present time. He stood here earlier today and talked about how based on democratic principles he believed that he was entitled to have this tax passed, and I think he relied in saying that on the results of the 1988 election. I find myself listening to that. It is a compelling argument. It is an important argument that a government that is elected has the right to do what it put forward to the people, what it has a mandate to do. It has a mandate to govern, but I fear the minister has pushed his point too far.

There surely have to be some limits on what a democratically elected government can do. We know there are some now under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The charter itself imposes a limit on what governments can do. I am not saying that the charter limits the implementation of this tax, but I am saying that there are limits on the right of a government to pass laws in Canada. That is fundamental. We can surely all agree on that.

Are there other limits? Are there limits imposed either by other law or by convention, or by limitations that are imposed by the very nature of a democratic society? That is the question that I have been struggling with myself. It is the answer to that question which either justifies or fails to justify the action that the Senate of