

Government Orders

dians do not like to pay taxes. Nobody likes paying taxes. However, we made it clear we intended to change a system that was not good for Canadian business, for our economy or for anything in general. We are going to tax goods and services, which is not exactly pleasant, but it is necessary. We are not in the business of passing out goodies, we are governing a country. We were elected to govern, and that is what we are doing.

The opposition was also elected to govern. I think we should remember that it was elected to govern with the party in power, and I think it should sit down and give the subject some serious thought and make concrete proposals instead of just being negative. Not just proposals, but concrete proposals.

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, I would like to stress, and this is important, that most Canadians on low incomes will not be affected by the GST.

• (1230)

I include the elderly, and I do so because scare tactics are being used against them, similar to the scare tactics used during the last election campaign on the free trade issue. Unfortunately, the opposition seems very fond of using these tactics. Instead of being realistic and getting their facts and figures straight, they use scare tactics.

An hon. member: Oh, oh! Not so!

Mr. Vincent: And that, Mr. Speaker, is wrong. I don't see why a member of Parliament should try to scare the elderly when he knows perfectly well that the GST will not have an impact on elderly Canadians on low incomes.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I support this bill, and I hope it will be passed as soon as possible.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, in the course of his speech, the parliamentary secretary said, and I quote:

—the main objective of the GST is to reduce the federal deficit.

However, during the election campaign, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) said: The tax reform will be revenue neutral.

Is the parliamentary secretary telling us, does he admit, that the minister did not tell the truth during the election campaign and that his objective always was to reduce the deficit?

Mr. Vincent: Mr. Speaker, I must admit I like the opposition member's question, but I also realize that notes come in very handy. This is what I said: The GST bill is part of a series of measures aimed at strengthening the Canadian economy and reducing the deficit.

That is what I said, Mr. Speaker. To answer the hon. member's question, the GST will not necessarily raise more revenue, if we consider the current situation. However, the GST will benefit Canadian businesses, because at the present time, importers are in a better position than our own Canadian businesses which are at a disadvantage because of a hidden, 13.5 per cent federal manufacturers' sales tax. Importers do not have this tax. A Canadian business that exports to other countries has the same 13.5 per cent cost, which does not exist in any other country. We are the only country in the world that still has a manufacturers' sales tax. It is important for us to change our tax system, to make our businesses competitive, and yes, they will make more money, and yes, they will pay more income tax, and yes, the economy will be better off, and if the economy is better off, yes, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to reduce the deficit as intended and as we should!

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Trois-Rivières (Mr. Vincent).

According to a Gallup poll published two or three days ago, 75 per cent of Canadians are now opposed to the GST. I also saw the poll showed that opposition in Quebec is almost the strongest, with 77 per cent against the GST. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Trois-Rivières: We are in a democratic country here and it is now clear that most Quebecers are very opposed to the GST; why is he, as a member from Quebec, in favour of it? Why does he not represent his constituents at all? Most people where he comes from are against this federal government measure, because the Finance Minister's (Mr. Wilson) bill will take a lot of money from ordinary people—it is regressive.