

tax system. Canadians may not like being told they have a deficit. They do not like being told they have a deficit problem. They may not like having to pay taxes, but Canadians are realistic. They realize there are no freebies. There are no painless solutions to this serious problem.

Mr. Gauthier: You and Wilson ought to get together.

Mr. Sobeski: We are clearly together, and I have been supporting this right from the beginning. We would like to improve it.

Naturally, we would like to have had a national sales tax that would have incorporated the federal and provincial sales tax systems, but this was not possible, given the political dynamics of the day. The issue is not those failed negotiations. The issue is the pressing need to proceed with reforming the tax system which is hurting Canadian business, and we are doing it in such a way that it leaves open the possibility of a truly national sales tax at a later date.

In conclusion, I would like to quote Terence Corcoran of *The Globe and Mail*. He said on December 8: "Think of the GST as a home renovation. It will make a bit of a mess while the work is being done, but the final result will be something you can be proud of".

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, after having heard three members from the government side, I think it is inevitable that I, and my party, should share the same contempt for this government that the Canadian people feel as a result of the utter contempt this government has directed toward the Canadian people.

I listened to the member for Edmonton Northwest bleating about the efforts of the New Democratic Party representative on the finance committee. Whatever may be said about the efforts of my colleagues on that committee, they had one single purpose, and that was to ensure that all of the Canadian people were heard on this tax. We can understand why we heard the parliamentary secretary say: "We did not want to hear any more because they are all going to say the same thing." Eighty per cent of the Canadian people are going to say the same thing, that this tax is an unacceptable tax. It is a tax that must be opposed, and will be opposed.

Time Allocation

We have heard my colleague talk of certain members on the government side who did not adhere to caucus discipline. I think it is important to know the fundamental elements that constitute the basis for that caucus discipline. I think it was best expressed by the hon. member for Simcoe Centre. She expressed it in ordinary language that everybody could understand: "If I listen to my constituents, I would not have time to give leadership."

We just heard the hon. member down the way say: "We are through with hearings. We are through with royal commissions. We are through with all that stuff. We made a decision." It is a decision which I said before is utterly contemptuous of the Canadian people.

• (1750)

Because the Canadian people have been denied the right to be heard adequately, the Ontario caucus of the New Democratic Party has for the last several days been holding hearings so at least Ontarians could be heard.

I think it is important, even before addressing the tax, to give you an impression of how Canadians are feeling. They feel that what is happening to their country as a result of the consistent actions of this government, tears at the very fabric of Canadian civilization, our humanitarian instincts and our sense of community. There is the sense that somehow our country is being robbed of so much that gave us pride and confidence, that in spite of everything, we could influence our fate and the destiny of this country.

But with the changes as a result of the free trade agreement, the cuts in UIC, privatization, deregulation, and other actions which have been opposed by the people but implemented by the government, it has created a terrible sense of powerlessness, frustration, anger and alienation. If the government wants to know why there seems to be so much division in this country then it should look for the answer in what it has done.

By creating a level playing field with the United States it has done what we predicted would happen. The Conservatives have made this country more like the United States. There are too many people out there who, frustrated with the government, are looking around for scapegoats. That is why we find so many of us looking for others to blame and exhibiting all kinds of character-