

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** Honourable senators, [English]  
when shall this bill be read the third time?

On motion of Senator Rossiter, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.

• (1410)

## VETERANS AFFAIRS

### OMISSIONS IN PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS—NOTICE OF INQUIRY

**Hon. Jack Marshall:** Honourable senators, I give notice that on Monday, April 5, 1993, I will call the attention of the Senate to omissions in Bill C-84, An Act to amend the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and the Pension Act and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof, and in related regulations which restrict the intent, meaning and interpretations of such documents as they apply to the recognition of Merchant Navy Veterans, including those who were Prisoners of War, and particularly to the urgency of speeding up the process of adjudication of claims and entitlements to awards; and, further, to examine the inconsistencies in the responsibilities of the Departments of Veterans Affairs Canada, Transport Canada, National Defence, and Government House, as they relate to the above.

[Translation]

## GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

### PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

**Hon. Jacques Hébert:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to present petitions signed by 18 citizens of New Brunswick who oppose the goods and services tax.

These petitions come mainly from Paquetville, Caraquet and Evangéline.

I also have the honour to present petitions signed by 125 citizens of Alberta who oppose the goods and services tax.

These petitions come mainly from Stony Plain, Edmonton, Spruce Grove and Calgary.

They are opposed to the GST in general, but especially as it applies to books and periodicals, an outrage in a civilized country.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### HEALTH AND WELFARE

#### RESTRICTIONS IN VETERANS DRUG PLAN— GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

**Hon. Royce Frith (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, as noted yesterday, the government has for some years — since Bill C-22 in 1987, I believe — gone to great lengths to convince us and all Canadians that drug price increases have been very moderate in Canada since the establishment of the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board.

Honourable senators, I have a memo that has gone out to all clients of Veterans Affairs Canada, announcing restrictions in the Veterans Drug Plan. The memo begins:

Dear client:

In recent years, the cost of health care benefits has risen sharply. The cost of prescription drugs has been one of the reasons for this increase.

My question is this: If the government's beloved Patented Medicine Prices Review Board is doing such a wonderful job, perhaps Senator Murray can explain why the Department of Veterans Affairs is claiming that the cost of prescription drugs has been one of the reasons that the cost of health care benefits has risen sharply?

Perhaps Senator Marshall could assist the government, since he voted in favour of Bill C-91 and is always expressing great concern for the plight of veterans.

Could the Leader of the Government enlighten us on that matter?

Is Ms Campbell the minister in charge of this department?

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government):** The Minister of National Health and Welfare, to whom the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board reports, is the Honourable Benoît Bouchard.

All I can add to the statement I made yesterday on that matter, and further to an exchange I had with your colleague, Senator Bonnell, is that the board began a consultation process in the summer of 1992 to review its current pricing guidelines.

I am told that both the minister, Mr. Bouchard, and Dr. Eastman, the chairman of the board, have been quoted in the media as recently as today to the effect that, where it is necessary to adopt new guidelines or to take further measures to attain the objective that we have stated for the government and the country on this matter, we will do so.