

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO MEET DURING SITTING OF
SENATE

Hon. Jean-Marie Poitras: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding Rule 59(1)(a), I move that the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce be authorized to sit at 4 p.m. next Tuesday, March 24, 1992, even if the Senate is sitting at that time, and that Rule 96(4) be suspended in relation thereto.

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I can only repeat what I said before. This is a serious problem for the Senate. Some way or other must be found to solve it. I am not objecting, but I repeat that we cannot go on this way.

Motion agreed to.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

Hon. Jacques Hébert: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present petitions signed by 1,355 citizens of Ontario who oppose the goods and services tax. These petitions come mainly from Deep River, Fort Erie, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Brampton, Mississauga, Ridge Way, Alexandria, Burlington, Hamilton and Ottawa.

I also have the honour to present petitions signed by 1,092 citizens of Ontario who oppose the goods and services tax. These petitions come mainly from Chatham, Wardsville, Barrie, Ayton, Hamilton, Mississauga, Ottawa, Marmorra, Nobleton, Kingston, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie.

[English]

All together, there are 2,447 irate citizens protesting against an unfair tax that has inflicted great misery on millions of Canadians.

Hon. Royce Frith (Leader of the Opposition): Hear, hear!

● (1430)

QUESTION PERIOD

NATIONAL UNITY

PROPOSED REFERENDUM—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Royce Frith (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I have a question for the government leader in the Senate. There are reports that the Prime Minister is frustrated. While actually commenting about the excellent results of the referendum in South Africa, he was persisting in his refusal to have one in Canada. But at that time he apparently appeared frustrated with how quickly other countries, including South Africa, have resolved major political problems while Canada continues to flounder in its constitutional quagmire. There is an alleged quotation from him which states:

[Senator Molgat.]

The Soviet Union remakes itself in weeks, German unification takes place in months, and Canadians can't agree on the wording of a Canada clause in decades.

My question for the Government Leader in the Senate is: Can that be interpreted as the Prime Minister blaming other Canadians for the failures that he bemoans, or is it the admission of a politician—an admission of his own failure and that of the Government Leader in the Senate in their efforts over the past many years at nation building? If it is such an admission of failure, it would be most refreshing.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Neither of the above.

Senator Frith: I would not have thought so.

Some Hon. Senators: Here, here!

Senator Doody: Have another shot at it.

Senator Frith: I am just about to. There is a doctrine in law that says the Queen or King can do no wrong. That has been obviously incorporated as the slogan of this government because never ever have I heard them admit, through the Leader of the Government in the Senate or otherwise, that they have ever done anything wrong in eight years.

Senator Simard: You have not been listening all the time.

Senator Frith: Point them out to me. I would love to see them. Thank you, senator.

Senator Simard: You were away on your tour.

Senator Frith: Is senator Simard undertaking to give me those submissions and put them on the table in the Senate?

Senator Simard: I would love to.

Senator Frith: I should like to see those admissions of wrong. I know that he admitted they were wrong on a bill the other day, but that is the only one I can think of.

[Translation]

THE SENATE

DELAY IN PRODUCTION OF *DEBATES*

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Chairman of the Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration Committee. Since I raised the matter of the late publication of the *Debates of the Senate* in this House yesterday and that an answer was given at a meeting of the Internal Economy Committee this morning, I consider important that the answer be repeated in this House and recorded in the *Debates*. Since the question has been formulated, could the Committee Chairman repeat the answer given this morning?

Hon. Thérèse Lavoie-Roux: I wish I could, senator, but I fear that I might be somewhat unfair in doing so. If you would allow me, I would be happy to have a complete answer which could be tabled at our next sitting.

Hon. Senator Molgat: By all means, senator. Please excuse me, I should have given you advance notice, but this came