

*Supply*

What is incredible about this is that collectively, the economists, the politicians and the bureaucrats have moved into jargon, systems, programs and processes that have fostered the cynicism of Canadians who say: "I do not think they know what they are talking about. I cannot understand it, but as I watch them perform and as I see what is happening to my country, I do not really think that any of us really have a grasp of this".

Surely there has to be a way. The point I want to make in this presentation is we must restore integrity to the system. I cannot let this pass. I want to be very serious because we are dealing with a very important problem when we talk about the understanding of Canadian taxpayers in the estimates process and how much money we are spending.

Today in the "Report on Business" in *The Globe and Mail* I see: "Bureaucrat warns of tax revolt. Canadians may be driven offshore, finance official tells MPs".

This official, David Dodge, is now the deputy minister of finance. He was the assistant deputy minister of finance when I sat on the finance committee and we went through the goods and services tax exposé. This is the chap who assured Canadians that the goods and services tax was the only way to go, that it was the right thing to do and was a model that would be followed by nations around the world.

The Australian government just used the GST to get itself re-elected. For those who did not follow the Australian election, they used Canada as an example of what happens to governments that bring in GST. Of course, the opposition in Australia was suggesting it might just do that.

I want to point out that if there is real cynicism and frustration on the part of Canadians, here is a senior bureaucrat, the top bureaucrat in the Department of Finance suggesting that there might be a tax revolt. He was the architect and the most staunch defender of the goods and services tax, which has been described by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business as the nightmare on Main Street.

• (1615)

The CFIB talks about the only way to deal with the GST. I quote: "The Canadian Federation of Independent Business will try to play a constructive role in the

ongoing reform of Canada's sales tax system and will go to the membership for a fresh mandate when a new government is formed and new options are presented to the Canadian public. A new sales tax initiative requires political leadership and a new spirit of co-operation between all the political and economic partners".

Certainly that is the answer to the GST morass, but to have the senior bureaucrat in the Department of Finance go further and say that it would be very difficult to raise personal income taxes, he says: "Whether we can go higher is up to you as politicians".

We have to come to grips with the fact that Canadians are really questioning the integrity of the system. They are asking us as politicians. They are going to be very aggressive in asking us over the next few months when we go out on the hustings as some of us try to get elected and many others across the country will try to get elected for the first time.

There is no doubt that Canadians understand that in a time of financial crisis resources have to be well managed. I do not think that anybody in the country is interested in having anyone point to the NDP governments of Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia or the former Liberal government or the current Conservative government on the federal scene and say: "They did a terrible job". We all know that. Everybody is just trying to do the best job they can to try to get the country back on track.

What I want to suggest today falls directly into what was said by my colleague from the NDP in terms of the estimates process here and the response of the parliamentary secretary.

If we are going to have any chance of convincing Canadians that they have to continue paying taxes and have to continue dealing with the cutbacks in services and programs, they are going to have to buckle down.

Governments are going to have to be extremely serious and very up front with what they are going to do. We are going to have to establish measurable goals. Political parties and governments are going to have to tell Canadians where they expect to be based on their policies and programs within a certain period of time. Those goals will have to be measurable. The systems to report on those goals will have to be transparent.