

Oral Questions

very principled position over the years and its joining with the Liberals to support the usurpation of the power of the people of Canada.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, the minister is sounding more and more like Jean Chrétien from 1981.

In light of that, I want to go to the Deputy Prime Minister who is responsible for the government in the absence of the Prime Minister.

Since the government is afraid to make a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada, since the government is not going to rescind the nomination of those eight senators and since the government will not withdraw the GST, I wonder if the Deputy Prime Minister will make sure the government does the right constitutional thing and have the Prime Minister go to Government House, see Governor General Ray Hnatyshyn, ask him to dissolve Parliament and let the people of Canada decide.

• (1430)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the last time the hon. member stood in this place and asked for that they did not like the result. They may not like the result when the election is called in due course this time.

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GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Automobile Association has again joined the ranks of those condemning the stupidity of the government's GST.

The Minister of National Revenue has told the CAA's members that they do not have to pay the GST when they renew their 1991 membership. On the other hand, he has told the CAA it must pay GST on a portion of these memberships after January 1. This leaves the CAA with the horrendous cost of going back to 3.5 million members to collect anywhere from 50 cents to \$2.40 in GST.

Will the Minister of Finance admit that the ramrod timetable of this government is causing havoc in the

marketplace? Will he scrap the September 1 starting date or, indeed, will he scrap the GST altogether?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think we have a case here of selective amnesia by the hon. member.

If she would reflect on the fact that the price of an automobile will go down \$700 or \$800 for a \$20,000 car as a result of the GST and not just focus on one side of the GST, she would realize that this is a very good tax as far as the automotive industry is concerned.

What we are seeing in the questions of the last few minutes is an attempt on the part of the Liberals to deflect the fact of what is going on in the Senate. I remind them of what is being said in editorial pages across the country: time to end the obstruction; the Liberal senators should call it quits; Liberal senators are not acting in the spirit of democracy; senators' shenanigans are intolerable; Senate gains, democracy loses; surgery needed to save—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa West on a further question.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, it appears to me and to all taxpayers of Canada that what the minister is trying to do is deflect attention from his tax to another place. We are not talking about a bill that 85 per cent of Canadians do not want. We are talking about directions coming directly from this government.

The minister says that from September 1 business has to advise its consumers that they will be charged taxes on services after January 1, if the GST becomes law.

Will the minister please tell us what law obliges businesses to do anything about the GST, or is the government now ruling by presidential decree?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about here is what is at stake in this country. We are talking about some of the fundamental principles of democracy.

What I might refer the hon. member to is a column by William Thorsell wherein he says: "We are all trustees of profoundly important democratic principles. As trustees, we simply cannot abandon those principles." What Mr. Thorsell is saying is that it is not just the issue of the day