

### *Government Orders*

people have been taxed enough, between the GST and all these other taxes. We said that we were not prepared to see another tax even though the government said it would only be 10 cents a week, less than a cup of coffee.

We did not believe the government. It had misled us with the GST. It said that it would be a transparent tax, but it has not been a transparent tax. It said that it would be revenue neutral and that it would not hurt, but it has hurt an awful lot. It has not been transparent, it has not been revenue neutral and we felt that this cup of coffee might sooner or later become much more than a cup of coffee. It might be a full steak dinner.

We as a party rebelled against the tax. The hon. member for Nickel Belt and myself said that this was unacceptable, and we still maintain that. When it came to the question of levying a tax we said no.

However, we did suggest that the government take this money from the general revenue fund. The government has already taxed us and the money is available. We are talking about \$61 million to do an honest deal with workers. The \$61 million is there. Right now the government is talking about paying \$4.3 billion for helicopters that are not needed. When we talk about money being available in government we find that when the government really wants to fund some sort of a pet project, whether it be a prosperity agenda for \$18 million or advertising campaigns to convince us to vote one way or another, it can find the money when the time comes.

The government did not accept the idea of taking this money out of general revenues. It said: "If we do not get this tax, which represents \$61 million from business, we are going to completely drop this protection for wages of workers". The government had already dropped the super priority idea.

When it came to the fund the government said: "If we cannot tax people anymore"—and there have been 34 tax increases since this government came to power—"if we cannot have another tax you are not going to get anything".

My colleague said that Freddie Kruger came on the scene and we found that this became a nightmare on Wellington Street. It was worse than that. If we are going to look at movies I remember *Love Story*, in which it was said that being in love means not having to say you are

sorry. Being Tory with this bankruptcy bill means not having to say that you are sorry or that you are wrong.

The Tories simply shifted from second to third gear and said: "No, we won't have a tax. We won't have super priority. We won't have a wage protection fund. What we'll simply do is rewrite history, change those 28 original parts of the bill that we had already agreed upon and come back with something else entirely different".

That is when we really started getting worried. At that point this bill, which seemed to be balanced and initially seemed to be fair, took on a life of its own. It became a grotesque caricature of itself and ended up not giving super priority to the worker, not to most workers. It ended up not doing what it said it would originally do, which was to provide a fund for most workers who would be needing it.

It finally ended up essentially caving in to the corporations. At the same time, the government relinquished its rights to the close to \$25 million that the government could expect in receipts or in money owing to it from the bankruptcies on an annual basis.

This is difficult to take for the average consumer or the average worker who wants to believe in a government and finds out that it does not want to do the right thing. Whether you are a Conservative, a Liberal, an NDPer or what have you, you know that at the grassroots level people are hurting.

We have had thousands and thousands of people involved in bankruptcy situations who have been looking to this government to help them out. We are not talking about a benign problem where people just say: "I will take my lumps and that is it".

We are talking about a malignancy which is eating away at the fabric of trust we have in this government. What particularly irks me is that while we are talking about protecting the banks, protecting the secured creditors and making sure the bankruptcy process becomes much more logical, rational and easier in certain cases, we have left a primary person outside the protection of this law.

That is what is wrong and that is what is so indicative of this government's heartlessness. This government does not have a heart. This government cares about the bottom line, as long as the bottom line benefits or works in favour of corporations.