

saying: "If you exempt them you have to exempt us but tax everybody else." Everybody says that sales taxes are the most regressive taxes. I am not satisfied that this government has searched long and hard for an alternative to the present goods and services tax. We know that it set out some guidelines: First, it was going to be visible; second, it would be simple; third, it would be integrated; and fourth, it would be revenue neutral. Now, for anybody who believed the Prime Minister when he said that, have I got a bridge to sell them.

• (1600)

This government lied to the people of Canada. The people who are responsible for economic policy lied to Canadians. What was supposed to be budget neutral has now created a bonanza for the government.

An Hon. Member: Its visible?

Mr. Rodriguez: It is visible like Salmon Rushdie, that is how visible it is. Do you believe everything the Prime Minister promises? We were not going to get free trade with the Americans when he was seeking the leadership of the Conservative Party in 1983. He said, as you recall, that famous quote: "You want to go to bed with an elephant, well you find out when the elephant rolls over what happens to you". The guy had a warped sexual mentality, going to bed with an elephant, but people believed him then and they found out what happened.

These four principles for this GST were laid down. Now we have found out that they are more practised in the breach than in the observance. The Conservatives are really after a cash cow to have in the barn because, once it is in the barn, for every 1 percentage increase, they can generate over \$2 billion in increased revenues. I say to Canadians that I do not know what to do. I do not know how we stop this government from imposing what is going to be the most regressive tax system in the western world. I do not know what we have to do.

It is unfortunate we do not have recall laws in this country so that from time to time, with a certain number of signatures, we can have a vote to recall the government or to recall a Member of Parliament. It is unfortunate that there is no check and balance in the system.

Government Orders

All I have seen since we started this prelude to the full-blown debate on GST are Tories who think it is a big joke and that somehow they are putting one over on the Canadian people. They are really doing a good job. People are writing letters to the Minister of Finance, signing petitions, all in good faith, thinking somehow or other all of these entreaties and indications of their opposition somehow persuades the government not to pursue this path. Unfortunately, they will find out, as I have, that they are just shut up after a short period of time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that the hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take a whole lot of time of the House, but I can only sit here so long. I just want to say to senior citizens, regardless of what the NDP told you last November, you still have your pensions and your medicare. What they are doing today is telling the government to do what they tell it. We listen and we hear and we understand. I think the NDP hope that Canadians do not understand because what the opposition is asking for is a return to the kind of government that was in this country from 1972 to 1984.

Mr. Milliken: That is right, we are.

Mr. Hawkes: That is right, he says, we are. That was a minority government in 1972 and it had a philosophy. It wanted to get re-elected. It does not matter what you have to do as long as the end goal is to get re-elected, power for power sake. What did they say to the Canadian people? They said: "We will spend, we will start all kinds of new programs. We will spend, and spend and spend. Then we will do another favour for Canadians, we will lower the tax rates."

That is the argument we are hearing here today. You do not have to tax. Be popular, spend, spend spend. Do not tax. What does that do? It does some great things for two months, three months. Everybody in the gallery today: "Use your credit card. Go out, enjoy. It will be a great supper. Spend \$100 on a meal. It will be a wonderful supper."

Mr. Boudria: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you have noticed and that you are quite well aware as well that one should not address the public