

Government Orders

• (1610)

[English]

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I note that the motion on the floor right now is for a six-month hoist which has been put forward by the Liberal party. Although the minister spoke strongly in favour of the goods and services tax, he did not really address the matter of postponing the introduction of the tax or the implementation of debate on the goods and services tax for six months.

I am wondering if the minister is aware of this. I know that ministers are often busy and do not have a chance to read the newspapers as regularly as some of those without as much responsibility. He may be aware that a Liberal leadership race is on in the country and that there is a considerable amount of assistance in moving this legislation through the House by the Liberal Party. Yet the Liberal Party continues to express a considerable amount of verbal opposition to the goods and services tax.

With that said, may I ask the minister if he thinks the Liberals may have proposed this motion for a six-month hoist at this time because they are looking forward to the conclusion of the leadership race after which, under a new leader, they can change their minds and support the goods and services tax?

Mr. Loiselle: Like all ministers, of course, I never read the newspapers. I say that as a former newspaper reporter. I know that one edition frequently erases the previous day's edition. I do not take it as seriously as some of my colleagues.

I am also aware that there is a Liberal leadership convention to be held. It is a very good democratic exercise. I follow it with care because I think it is important for the opposition to organize itself. So far it has not proven to be very well organized.

In its opposition to the GST in particular, I have heard a lot of—I would not say nonsense because I suppose the word would not be welcome—views put forward even today which are far from the reality of anything we have in mind or anything we are doing.

I refer to the elderly and tourism. I am more convinced than ever that a major effort to provide information is required. We have a responsibility to provide that information. We will, of course, make every effort so that our

friends across the floor will understand what we are doing.

It is a modern tax. What they call a tax grab is something that 48 countries have implemented as a mechanism to address government revenue. So it must not be so out of this world. Yet, on every aspect of it, we hear opposition.

We have had a white paper, technical documents and debate. We will have more debate. We will discuss this at length with our friends in the House and we will go ahead with it. The GST is needed. We must make sure that the present manufacturers' sales tax, the greatest disaster as far as fiscal framework is concerned, is removed so that our industries can develop, so that jobs can be created and so that we can compete in this very difficult world.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the comments of the minister on the goods and services tax. I am surprised at the suggestion that maybe the opposition is not well organized in terms of how we are dealing with the GST.

I would suspect that the minister would be impressed by the fact that after dropping the rate from 9 per cent to 7 per cent opposition in the country has increased. I think what the minister fails to understand is that the people of Canada are leading the fight against the GST.

It is all well and good for politicians on all sides of the House to have their views. They perhaps may not share all the same views. But the Canadian people have decided that they are opposed to the goods and services tax.

I would like to ask the minister if he is satisfied that the government is well organized in putting forward its tax reform dealing with the GST and the supposed reform of the income tax side of the equation. We were supposed to see the disappearance of the surtax on income tax. We were going to see a reduction in the rate for middle-income earners.

Is the minister as pleased with the over-all effort that has gone into the GST as he is with his reform of financial institutions?

One has to be very careful about suggesting that the opposition is not getting its act together in terms of proposing alternatives when the minister in his own responsibilities is sitting back while the institutions involved in the financial sector in this country are hanging by their very nails. They are grasping for some legislation, something that has been promised for at least