

Oral Questions

As to the spinoffs from the construction, there is no guarantee that Quebec firms will get their fair share.

For all these reasons, I am quite surprised not to see a single Quebec representative of whatever their stripe, either blue, red or yellow, rise in this House to discuss openly this ambiguous project.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to give Quebecers fair warning, because obviously they are taken for a ride.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE SENATE

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday Canadians saw the Prime Minister fall to a new low, and I am not talking only about the Gallup poll, when he completed his packing of the Senate by using a provision of the Constitution for the first time in our history to appoint the eight additional Senators in a stubborn and desperate attempt to force through the goods and services tax, a tax Canadians do not want.

Why is the Prime Minister continuing to try to ram through the goods and services tax when Canadians know and economists generally agree that it is the wrong tax at the wrong time. It will cause serious damage to an economy already in serious difficulties because of the policies of this government?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, far from falling to a new low, I think that all of us would be interested in noting the almost universal condemnation of the actions of the Liberal Party over in the Senate in their efforts to thwart the will and the rights of the House of Commons in Canada.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the government has ignored the universal, not almost, but the universal condemnation by Canadians generally of this government's misguided goods and services tax.

The Deputy Prime Minister has ignored the point of my question so I will ask it again. Why is he ignoring the

impact of the goods and services tax on an economy which if it is not already in recession, is tumbling headlong into recession at a time when world oil prices are soaring? They are reaching record levels. Why does the Deputy Prime Minister and his government want to jack up the home heating bills of every Canadian by 7 per cent next January and each and every month thereafter?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, if there is anything that is undermining the confidence of the Canadian economy it is the actions of the Liberal Party and particularly the actions of the Liberal senators.

Just simply to support that, because it is not only the contention that we have on this side of the House, it is the contention of learned opinion right across the country. Right here, *The Ottawa Citizen* in today's editorial states:

Senate Crisis Blame the Liberal goons

This fight has nothing to do with whether the GST is a good or bad tax—Rather, it has everything to do with discrediting the Tories;

Equally contemptible is the blatantly opportunistic NDP which is calling on the Senate to kill the tax.

The *Montreal Gazette*, "Hitting a new parliamentary low"; the *Calgary Herald*—

Mr. Allmand: Nobody believes that.

Mr. Keyes: Not according to 85 per cent of the population.

Ms. Copps: Issue the writ.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, when I answer the question, and they do not like the answer, they start heckling. They cannot take it.

The *Calgary Herald*, "Prime Minister Brian Mulroney had little choice but to invoke section 26 of the British North America Act—In fact, it could even be argued that he had a duty to do so".

So, Mr. Speaker, what is at issue is whether Mr. MacEachen over in the Senate is going to pick and choose as to what pieces of legislation he thinks are appropriate for the Canadian people or whether those decisions are going to be made here on the floor of the House of Commons.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!