

Government Orders

incumbent on members of Parliament to explain to the approximately 75 per cent of Canadians who are opposed to the GST why they are wrong.

The simple answer is for government members to muzzle the opposition. That is nothing new because of the experience of the finance committee over the past six months. As we travelled into Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Halifax, St. John's, Fredericton and Charlottetown, Canadians were given very, very limited opportunity to speak out as to why they were opposed to the goods and services tax.

That syndrome continues. The Minister of Justice came in this afternoon, rose on a point of order and told Canadians that not only would they not be allowed to discuss to any great degree the goods and services tax and what it means to them and their families, neither would elected members of Parliament. We will be precluded from speaking out on the goods and services tax. It seems absolutely ludicrous to me that people who believe in the goods and services tax will not stand in their place and explain to Canadians what the government propaganda machine and a couple of ministers who spoke out on the matter have been unable to do.

I was very pleased to learn over the weekend that the Minister of Finance will be attending a meeting of the chamber of commerce in Edmonton on March 5. Since there has been a coherent long-term approach on the part of the government to restrict appearances by government members to very special contexts, I and I am sure Albertans would like to see an open forum.

We would like to see a forum where not just members of the chamber of commerce but Albertans generally could attend, not to listen to a debate between two politicians, but to be able to ask questions that concern them. The problem with the GST debate so far is that there have not been many answers from the government except to suggest that we have to replace the manufacturers' sales tax.

I say to Canadians what they must ask their members of parliament who support the GST what the tax is meant to replace. The manufacturers' sales tax had raised less than \$9 billion when the Conservatives came to power in 1984. The GST in 1991-92 is predicted to bring in in excess of \$25 billion. That is a threefold

increase and the government says it is not a new tax. It may not be a new tax but it is going to bring in an awful lot more money than what was being raised by the so-called silent killer of jobs in 1984.

• (1820)

I would like to make a point to my western friends. Having travelled in the west, I know the deep-rooted feeling there against the goods and services tax. I would suggest that when members on the government side speak about the GST, and in particular about agriculture and farmers, they do not confuse the issue. The question of how farmers will operate their businesses in terms of inputs, credits, exemptions and so forth is one thing. It is debatable whether they will be better off or worse off.

Unfortunately, what members to your right do not understand is that farmers and their families are consumers. They do not just farm the land, they do other things. They buy other things than what they need to farm with. That is why Albertans, Manitobans and people from Saskatchewan understand why this tax is bad. It is not just what it is going to do to the primary industries in this country, it is not just what it is going to do to farmers or fishermen, it is what happens when people do not understand that farmers, like every other consumer in the country, are going to be attacked by the goods and services tax.

Mr. Sobeski: Who's paying the MST now?

Mr. Young (Gloucester): My friend asks who is paying the MST now. The people of Canada are paying the MST. There is no question about that. We paid \$7.7 billion in 1984 but the Tories want to transfer a \$7.7 billion tax that was being collected in 1984 into a \$25 billion to \$26 billion tax on consumers in 1991. That is the Tory way. That is the answer to the question.

Canadians know now that there is a manufacturers' sales tax and they know they are paying it. The fact is Canadians are saying to this government that they would rather stay with the status quo, the devil they know rather than the devil they don't know. That is what Canadians are saying.

The position of the Liberal party has been that we need to have tax reform with fiscal reform, something that nobody to the right understands. They know how to raise taxes. They knew how to raise them 31 times in five years, but they do not know how to practise fiscal reform