

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition on behalf of many Canadians with regard to their opposition to the GST.

A virtual litany of frustration and despair among our Canadian people continues as day after day we seem to be knocking on a door that will go unanswered for some time with regard to this taxation.

The people of Canada are indeed frustrated. I would only hope that some place along the line the government will come to its senses and rescind the GST which was passed here in the House.

• (1550)

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I stand with the rest of my colleagues, pursuant to Standing Order 36, and bring to your attention that 86 per cent of Canadians do not agree with the imposition of the regressive and poorly-conceived goods and services tax, in particular as it applies to books, magazines, and newspapers.

These printed words are the corner-stone of democracy, education and culture. A literate and productive society cannot afford a tax on that kind of thinking which is food for the mind as it is food for the soul.

These people say it is hard to believe that the government has spread its net so wide as to trap the Bible and the Koran. The Prime Minister agrees that books should not be taxed and the Minister of Communications agrees that books should not be taxed. It is too bad that they cannot convince the Minister of Finance not to tax books, and believe and listen to the people of Canada.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many people in several communities in the province of Ontario. They note that never since Confederation have we had tax on books, newspapers and magazines but this government is going to apply the GST to newspapers, magazines and books. It talks a lot about literacy, but obviously it has no commitment to it.

As a former educator, I think it is ridiculous that we cannot educate the front benches of the government because they are not listening. When students are not listening, they cannot be taught.

I hope there will be success in the days ahead to get this message through from the people who want uninhibited dissemination of the printed word as a corner-stone of democracy, culture, education and a literate and productive society. We do not want the 7 per cent GST applied to it or to education in any way.

RADIO LICENCE FEES

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I rise today, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present a petition signed by many individuals from Colchester County, Nova Scotia.

The petitioners are concerned about the huge increases in telecommunications fees for radio equipment that have been levied by the federal government. The fire departments are primarily non-profit organizations and this will cause many volunteer fire departments to have to defer, delay, or cancel the purchase of equipment that they use to protect both individual safety and that of property. They ask the government, in this particular instance, to exempt volunteer fire departments from this excessive fee structure.

[Translation]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in presenting today to the House, pursuant to Standing Order 36, a petition coming from Alberta and from western and eastern Ontario.

Again, we call on the Government of Canada to drop its plan to impose the GST on books. The petitioners submit that imposing a tax on books, newspapers and weeklies would be tremendously regressive.

[English]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I too have the honour to rise and submit before the House hundreds of names signed to petitions in the province of Ontario pleading with the government not to impose the GST on reading materials.

It should also be noted by the government that in the other place, there will be an amendment moved today to remove reading materials from the GST attack. The petitioners are asking that the government finally listen to Canadians from coast to coast.