

Routine Proceedings

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I stand in this House once again to call on the government to come to its senses with respect to the way it is taxing the people of Canada and its concept of a goods and services tax.

The words on the petition express the very sincere worry of Canadians across this land that they are not going to have any disposable moneys, that they are not going to be able to make this economy work. Since September 1984, this Conservative federal government has imposed on Canadian taxpayers at least 31 new taxes and tax increases. Since 1984, the federal sales tax, which we have called the silent killer of jobs so many times in this House, has been increased from 9 per cent to 13.5 per cent. Now they want to put it back to 9 per cent and tell us that they are giving us a gift.

The Conservative federal government wants to impose a new federal goods and services tax. Whether it is 9 per cent, 7 per cent, or any per cent, the public does not want it. Obviously this government cannot hear or does not care to listen. This new tax will be hidden, irrespective of what this government says that it will be an open and well understood tax.

It will apply virtually to everything they buy. The imposition of this new goods and services tax will cause serious and unfair hardship to low and middle income Canadians. There is not enough money in what it is proposing to enable people to buy fairly and evenly across this land. The imposition of this tax will create onerous burdens on small business.

I would suggest that in the name of those Canadians from the Mount Royal riding who have called on me to oppose strongly in their name this new goods and services tax which is an unprecedented tax grab from the pockets of Canadians and will hit them not only with higher taxes but with higher inflation, higher interest rates, and higher unemployment. I think this government does not realize what it is doing.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, I have the duty and the privilege of presenting a number of petitions this morning which have been certified correct as to form. They all relate to the goods and services tax, that abominable tax proposed by the

Conservative government. I would like to cite one petition, in particular.

This particular petition is on behalf of private music teachers in my Province of Manitoba. It specifically mentions that the taxation of these private lessons would impose a financial burden on the parents and students involved. They would be required to pay such a tax on a weekly basis for at least nine months of the year and often for more than one member of a family.

They ask all of us who are members of this House to reject, and soundly reject, this goods and services tax.

• (1210)

Mr. A. H. Harry Brightwell (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition under Standing Order 36 from people in the town of St. Mary's concerning figure skating. They plead that we consider instruction in skating as an educational service and therefore exempt skating educational expenses from the proposed goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and the duty to present two sets of petitions to the House this afternoon. Both have been certified correct according to Standing Order 36.

I have a petition here that has been signed by residents of the London—Kitchener, Ontario area; Melville, Saskatchewan; Yorkton, Saskatchewan; a number of other places in western Canada, Prince Albert, for example; and Ottawa.

These Canadians are very concerned about the government's plan to drastically reduce VIA Rail services. They call upon Parliament to maintain, improve and modernize VIA Rail services in those areas of the country where it can provide a more rapid economic, safe, convenient, environmentally sound, and energy efficient alternative to other means of transportation.

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Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I also have a group of petitions signed by 232 residents of the riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, primarily the community of Thunder Bay but also from Upsala. These petitions have been circulated by merchants in the community who are concerned about the goods and services tax: Intercom Supply, Michael's Hair