

Oral Questions

saying to me, and I am sure they are saying to other Members of Parliament: "We do not need more rhetoric. What we need is action from the Government". I ask the Prime Minister again, will he do the honourable thing by the seniors, and now do what he promised he would do during the election campaign, and not do a flip-flop and do the opposite? Will the Prime Minister give that commitment to the House and to the seniors, now?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think it should be obviously pointed out, although I thought it was clear, that, as we speak in the House of Commons, no senior citizens' revenues have been negatively impacted upon in any way.

Mr. Deans: You said you would do it.

An Hon. Member: It is proposed.

Mr. Mulroney: The Hon. Member says it is proposed. Yes, it is proposed for January 1 of next year. Meanwhile no senior citizens are in any way negatively affected by this. We also indicated in the same document that was put forward that, as a concomitant obligation, we would continue to monitor the matter very closely to ensure that, at the earliest possible moment, we would be able to sustain the senior citizens further. That is what we are doing. It seems to me it is straightforward and in good faith, and I hope my hon. friend accepts that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Young: Mr. Speaker, Canadian seniors took the Prime Minister at good faith a year ago, and look what has happened to them since.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST THAT MINISTER MEET SENIOR CITIZENS IN HALIFAX

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. If the Government truly believes in consultation, I intend to be in Halifax on Monday speaking to seniors.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Order.

Mr. Young: The Minister of Finance will be there at the same time, speaking to business people. I want to ask the Minister of Finance whether he will take five or 10 minutes out of his busy schedule to come and talk, meet, and listen to the seniors I will be meeting with in Halifax on Monday. Would the Minister of Finance agree to do that?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member says that the Canadian seniors voted for this Party, and then asks "what happened?". What has happened is that 271,000 of their children and grandchildren have

new jobs. That is what has happened since this Government came in.

● (1430)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deans: How many seniors have new jobs?

Mr. Mulroney: If you are going to be fair—and I know my hon. friend wants to be fair—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deans: Why don't you sit down? You are a disgrace; you are a sham.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Rodriguez: You broke your promise.

Mr. Nunziata: What about integrity, honesty, and credibility?

Mr. Speaker: All this yelling back and forth does none of us any credit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF BUDGET MEASURE

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Last week when we visited Atlantic Canada we talked with senior citizens who told us of the serious situation in which they find themselves. In fact many of them who are receiving OAS and GIS are living at a loss of over \$300 to \$400 per year. The Council of Maritime Premiers met yesterday and it, too, agreed that seniors had been ill-treated by the Budget.

Will the Prime Minister rethink this ill-conceived move in the Budget, and restore full indexation on the OAS to senior citizens? Will he meet with seniors to discuss this in a public forum, and look at it seriously? It is a very serious problem, and I think the Prime Minister should address it seriously.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have been seeking to do precisely that. I recognize that it is a serious problem. I told my hon. friend, I think on another occasion, that I suspected that no one in the House of Commons, irrespective to his political persuasion, took any pleasure at all in having to reduce programs for any of our citizens. I think in an ideal world we would like to increase those programs for everyone. The fact of the matter is that it was our judgment that the value of these programs was being seriously jeopardized by a mountain of debt, the interest payments on which were compromising the capacity of the Government of Canada to meet and enhance these programs.

Having said that, I acknowledge full well the possible impact of it, which is why it was specifically inserted in the Budget. There has been no impact upon any of our senior citizens as we speak, nor could there be until 1986. Meanwhile