

ROLE OF ONTARIO PREMIER

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I was astounded to learn that before Parliament was consulted, before the people of Newfoundland were consulted, Bill Davis was consulted. He approved the deal. He said: "It's okay, they're poor". I want to know why the Premier of Ontario was consulted. I want to know exactly what role he played in this deal. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, "check it with Erik" has been replaced with "check it with Bill".

Mr. Crosbie: Who did you check it with?

• (1420)

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, it has been the desire of both our Party and Premier Peckford and the Government of Newfoundland that any deal struck with Newfoundland should be in the national interest. The only way one can determine what the national interest is, is to talk to all the people involved.

In the formulation of the Atlantic accord back in the spring, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and I were in touch with other Premiers of other provinces, including Alberta, the Maritimes, and the Premier of Ontario, because we were breaking new ground. We were determined that we were going to use the accord as an instrument of equality for Newfoundlanders.

When I talked to the Premier on this matter, I pointed out that the average income in Newfoundland is 57 per cent of the national average. That is why they are poor.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Miss Carney: The premiers we have talked to agreed with us that the accord could be an instrument to bring equality and fairness to Newfoundland.

TRAINING IN OFFSHORE SKILLS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, only if Newfoundlanders have skills will they get jobs in the offshore. Why is there absolutely no mention of education or training in this agreement? What does the Government intend to do about training because, if it does not do something, Bill Davis's assessment of poor Newfoundlanders will be true eternally.

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would say that this is a classic case of sour grapes. Don't you believe in good news?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rompkey: Answer the question.

Miss Carney: I would suggest to the Hon. Member that he wait until he sees the full agreement. We have a draft agree-

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ment of 62 clauses, in which more work has to be done in some technical areas.

Mr. Rompkey: You have shown it to Davis and not to us.

Miss Carney: We will certainly be presenting it in the House.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

PRINCIPLE OF UNIVERSALITY

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. This morning the Minister of Finance told *La Presse* that universality is a luxury of the past. In September it was a sacred trust; in October it was negotiable, and now, as of this morning, universality is out the window. Who speaks for the Government, the Prime Minister of Canada or the Minister of Finance?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the press report that I have makes no such reference. I am sure that it is an inadvertent distortion of the facts.

The Minister of Finance is reported as saying that the awarding of social benefits to persons earning more than the national average—he did not refer to universality at all, at least in the press reports I have—

Mr. Deans: What are you talking about? Do you understand what is written there?

Mr. Mulroney: While I suppose it is open for debate or discussion, all he was saying was that his objective was to try to put more money into the hands of Canadians who need it most. The poor and the dispossessed in our society need more benefits than the bank president making \$500,000 a year. That is exactly what we want to do.

Mr. Deans: Sit down. Don't be absurd.

SOCIAL CONTRACT

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Does the Prime Minister not acknowledge that there has been a sacred social contract between the people of Canada and the Government of Canada regarding social programs? Is he now prepared to break this contract?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the traditions of this Party have been consistent from the very beginning. Mr. Diefenbaker and Mr. Stanfield, among others, had occasion to debate this in the House, and did so with great honour to the Party and the country. We stand for social justice. We stand for social programs. We stand for equality of opportunity, and we also stand for an examination to try to help those in our society who genuinely need assistance. There are too many people in this country living below the poverty line. We are trying to