

Government was sworn in is ample proof of our capacity and commitment to do precisely that. It is because we want to preserve the integrity of the social programs for the elderly that we are building these new jobs across Canada that will benefit the entire nation.

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER MEET SENIOR CITIZEN ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, the only thing that surprises Members on this side is the flippant manner in which the Prime Minister answers questions.

Joyce King of the United Senior Citizens of Ontario said yesterday that, contrary to Government propaganda, there was no formal consultation with recognized senior citizens organizations prior to those OAS changes being brought in in the Budget. That is the same story that we heard last week in Atlantic Canada—no consultation.

In the interest of allowing senior citizens to be heard, will the Prime Minister agree to set aside adequate time next week to meet with the recognized senior citizens' organizations in a public forum in Ottawa? Will he do that for senior citizens?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I try as best I can to meet with all groups who seek to see us. I cannot see them all, but I know that the Minister of National Health and Welfare has been meeting with representatives of seniors groups, as have other Ministers of the Crown. I know that we would look forward to further meetings, some of which are already scheduled between the Minister and representatives of other groups. We are careful to listen to them, and we listen to them carefully. That has always been our position.

In fact, so that there is no surprise, it is set out in the budget document that the Government will review the adequacy of payments in light of future circumstances, and will increase them as resources permit. That has always been the intention of the Government. It seems to me perfectly honourable and straightforward.

Mr. Tobin: The only senior citizens the Minister of Health apparently met are those who, he tells us, support this budget measure. I can tell him that there are some who do not.

Prime Minister, senior citizens want to meet with you. They want a meeting with you, and they deserve one. They believe that you have been deafened by the applause of 210 Members of Parliament, who applaud your brutal measures toward senior citizens. Will you, Prime Minister—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Tobin: Will you, Prime Minister—

Mr. Speaker: I think Hon. Members are trying to remind the Hon. Member that questions are to go through the Chair.

Oral Questions

Mr. Tobin: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Prime Minister if he, not another bevy of Ministers, but the Prime Minister, who personally carried the flag last summer and made specific commitments to senior citizens last year, will be available? Can you make a few hours available next week to meet in a public forum with senior citizen organizations which are coming to Ottawa to hold yourself accountable, or are you telling them that, even if they spend precious dollars, you will not hold yourself accountable to them?

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Tobin: They want to know.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I could not hear the end of the question.

Mr. Tobin: May I repeat the question? Point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Beaches.

● (1425)

REQUEST FOR COMMITMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. I have just returned from talking and listening to seniors in Manitoba and Saskatchewan over the last couple of days. Those seniors are telling me to advise the Prime Minister that the Prime Minister did not have a mandate to do what he is doing to senior citizens through the Budget.

There is now a broad cross-section of Canadian society that is saying he does not have a consensus. Would the Prime Minister now do the honourable thing that he promised to do during the election campaign, and since, and say to the seniors: "I gave you a clear commitment and I am going to live up to it"? Will the Prime Minister not make that statement now?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is our hope that, with the measures presently in place, we will not only honour our commitments to the senior citizens but do very much better during the life of the mandate of this Government in the obligations we have toward senior citizens. I think senior citizens, and all Canadians, recognize that a healthy economy is required—

Mr. Nunziata: You have no credibility, Mulroney.

Mr. Mulroney: —to be able to pay out these benefits. We want to make sure we are able to do so. We are hoping that the kinds of economic moves we are making will result in a stronger economy so that we can do more, infinitely more—not less—for the elderly.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. The seniors across the country are