

[Translation]

SOCIAL SECURITY

GOVERNMENT POSITION ON PROGRAMS

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Today, we saw the Minister of National Health and Welfare release another trial balloon when he said they were going to give with one hand and take away with the other. I would like to ask the Prime Minister why he does not tell Canadians frankly and honestly that he deceived them during the election campaign and that now he is in power, he is going to cut back social programs one way or another, either through the tax system or directly, but cuts there will be.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I feel a little uneasy if I do not hear the Hon. Member for Hamilton East. My hon. friend knows perfectly well that we have no intention of acting in the way he suggests. We had in mind—as the Hon. Member for Sudbury said during the televised debate this summer, it might be a good thing—since this is acceptable, to use the tax system to try and get more funds for those who need help most in our society. That is all we are trying to do, while maintaining the integrity of the principles by which we are governed. We are trying to find a better way of using the funds at our disposal to help the neediest in our society who truly need government aid.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has just told the House once again, to raise the level of anxiety among Canadians . . . The Minister of National Health and Welfare has just launched a trial balloon and now the Prime Minister is continuing in the same vein.

I would like to know whether the Prime Minister intends to “come clean” very shortly, in order to put an end to the anxiety that exists among senior citizens and mothers with a family. If the decision is already made, why bother about so-called consultations, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, it is just the usual smoke screen and the usual canards used by the Liberal Party. We all know this is part of the traditional politics and stunts of the Liberal Party in Quebec. They have always made a habit of heaping lies and insults on their opponents. You know quite well what we are saying. We are here to help the average citizen have a better life. That is what we are going to do. We are going to defend the integrity of our social programs against the petty politicking of the Liberal Party. That is what we are trying to do.

Privilege—Mr. Langdon

● (1500)

[English]

CLERK OF PETITIONS' REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petitions presented by Hon. Members on Monday, December 17, with one exception, meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

DEREGULATION OF TELEPHONE SERVICE

Mr. Speaker: The petition presented by the Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) does not meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENT OF MR. MULRONEY DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Speaker: I have received a note from the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) who desires to raise a question of privilege.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question of privilege arising from a statement made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in Question Period. I understood the Prime Minister to say that I had destroyed the Ontario Liberal Party, and for that I would like—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Copps:—an apology from the Prime Minister.

An Hon. Member: Who do you want to blame it on?

Ms. Copps: I would also like the Prime Minister to know that the only thing he has destroyed is his Government's credibility, and that was self-inflicted.

Mr. Speaker: I could say this is not a question of privilege but it may be a point of order or a matter for debate at some other time.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Sheila, you could not do it alone; you had help.

Mr. Speaker: I have a question of privilege from the Hon. Member for Essex-Windsor (Mr. Langdon).

Mr. Beatty: Peterson's gain is Turner's loss.

ALLEGED MISQUOTATION OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I raise this question in a search for enlightenment from you, if I could.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Hon. Member have a question of privilege?