

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Hon. Member that his time has expired.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

NEED FOR MULTILINGUISTIC PENSION OFFICERS

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, over the years Canada has negotiated a number of social security agreements with other countries. These agreements generally provide that a person who lived in a foreign country and also lived in Canada during his working life could claim social security benefits from both Canada and the foreign country, based on the number of years in each country.

Perhaps the most well known of these agreements is the one with Italy which has proven most beneficial to those Canadians of Italian origin. Many of those persons have lived in Canada for over 20 years. They are approaching retirement, and are today finding it difficult to get the necessary papers organized with respect to their Italian pension claims. To some extent the Government of Italy has been helpful in supplying assistance in Montreal, Toronto, and Hamilton, but that assistance is provided separate and apart from the pension office run by the Department of National Health and Welfare.

In my view the Government of Canada ought to employ, in its pension offices, people conversant with foreign tongues, who can explain the agreements to pension applicants and make sure applicants are able to obtain the full benefits they are entitled to under the agreements. I therefore call upon the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) to take action as soon as possible to staff offices in such manner so that Canadians can be assisted in filing the necessary papers—

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Hon. Member that his time has expired.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NAMIBIA—SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, it has been 13 years since the World Court decision declaring the continued presence of South Africa in Namibia to be illegal, and six years since the passage of Security Council Resolution 435 requesting the withdrawal of South Africa from Namibia. Despite these clear cut, straightforward decisions, the people of Namibia are still struggling for their independence, and South Africa is still thumbing its nose at world opinion and the vast majority of world nations. These delays are intolerable. They are caused principally by South Africa and the 1982 policy of President Reagan to support South Africa by linking the removal of South African troops from Namibia with the removal of Cuban troops from Angola, where there should be no linkage whatsoever.

Oral Questions

• (1415)

I would urge our Government to do three things. First, support those Americans who are trying to change their Government's linkage policy. Two, support an economic boycott of South Africa. Three, insist on action by the U.N. contact group to implement Security Council Resolution 435.

Surely Namibia will one day be free, but Canadians can help to bring this about more quickly with a minimum of violence and suffering.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PROVINCIAL PREMIERS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Yesterday the Secretary of State for External Affairs failed completely to explain the contradictory positions of the Government relating to the starving nations in Africa. In his meeting with the Premiers yesterday, I wonder whether the Prime Minister had any better luck in explaining the contradictory positions relating to transfer payments to the provinces.

The Prime Minister was quoted as saying that "we have not envisaged any cut-backs", yet the Minister of Finance, in a meeting with reporters after his budget, said that such cut-backs were "on the table". Did the Prime Minister discuss these cut-backs affecting medicare, social security, and university and community college funding, with his counterparts at the provincial level? Are these cut-backs on the agenda for the next meeting of the Prime Minister with the Premiers on February 14? If not, is he setting up the provinces for a Valentine's Day massacre?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my right hon. friend seems to assume, as he has often said, that there are three responses to these kinds of matters. One is cutting social programs and reneging on your promises, and so on. There is a fourth response, which is economic growth that we plan to generate by our policies.

In direct response to my right hon. friend, the matter did not arise per se, although clearly if it is raised by the Premiers in Regina we will be happy to discuss it. The answer is that there will be no unilateral cut-backs such as the previous Government initiated. Anything which we care to discuss would be reviewable by all. It would not be introduced unilaterally. That was the intent of my answer.

CONTENT OF DISCUSSIONS WITH PREMIERS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether, during the course of those discus-