

consideration: "I should insist on the precise meaning of words".

A Government that debases the language is as bad as one that debases the coinage. I call upon the Government to adopt as its New Year's resolution, to say what it means and mean what it says.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

SOCIAL SECURITY

GOVERNMENT POLICY—REQUEST FOR PRESENTATION OF BUDGET

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. When I was on the West Coast I read the disturbing statements of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance to the effect that they intend to dismantle our social programs.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We are so outraged about this particular situation that I intend at three o'clock to present a motion for an emergency debate.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Well, that sacred trust has now become a broken trust.

Will the Prime Minister instruct his Minister of Finance to bring down a Budget at an early opportunity so that we will know the entire scope of what the Government has in mind, who will receive old age pensions and who won't, who will receive family allowances and who won't? I believe the confusion which has now been shored up in the minds of Canadians needs to be dispelled and an early Budget brought down in the House.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in a letter issued on October 6, 1982, it was stated as a recommendation that "it means looking seriously at the universality of the social security programs which now have become the vested interest of the middle class rather than the needy". The author of that is the McMillan, Binch newsletter, and we reject that. We reject that philosophy. We have been defending an important proposition.

Ms. Copps: Get out of the gutter, Brian.

Mr. Mulroney: We have been defending an important proposition. I was asked on Friday:

When the Minister of Finance of this country says that we cannot afford social programs for middle income Canadians, is the Prime Minister saying that the Finance Minister is wrong?

Oral Questions

And I answered:

I am saying that the Finance Minister never said that.

The reason for that is that, inadvertently or otherwise, my friend from Essex-Windsor amputated two important words—"upper and"—from the answer, which meant clearly—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney:—which meant very clearly—

An Hon. Member: He wasn't quoting.

Mr. Mulroney:—which meant very clearly that when I said that the Minister of Finance never said that, he never had said that, and the Hon. Member was wrong, and the Leader of the NDP was wrong yesterday in the House of Commons.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: We stand for social justice and fairness.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

OLD AGE PENSIONS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Essex-Windsor and the Hon. Member for Oshawa will be able to take care of themselves. However, I want to say to the right hon. gentleman that I am getting a little tired and annoyed—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):—at selective miscitations of what I am purported to have said or written. I did not write that document. I did not write that document.

It is quite clear now that the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister, throughout the election, had a hidden agenda whereby they were going to dismantle the social contract.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): By "social contract" I mean the contract by which hundreds of thousands of Canadians paid taxes in order to qualify eventually for old age pensions. How many of our senior citizens will qualify and how many will not qualify, despite the fact that every one of them has paid taxes toward old age pensions?

● (1420)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, all of the senior citizens are going to qualify because we have never placed in jeopardy the notion of universality for our senior citizens. All of them are going to qualify for it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!