

*Oral Questions***POLITICAL PARTIES**TORONTO ELECTION CAMPAIGNS—STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO
MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to the real debate and ask the Prime Minister a question. His Finance Minister was also quoted in this famous interview as saying that "the election campaigns that we fight in downtown Toronto are don't vote for the Tories or they are going to send you back to Italy." As an Italian Canadian I was profoundly shocked that the Minister would insult the intelligence and integrity of this proud, hard-working community. *Questo governo è proprio ignorante!*

Can the Prime Minister provide the House with evidence that would support this disturbing allegation, and does he share his Minister's observations about Italians' understanding of the Canadian political system?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his observation. For my part, and that of my Party, we have been honoured by the support that we have received from the Italian community in Canada which made such an outstanding contribution to our national life. We are deeply honoured because of the growing support that we receive from that community.

During election campaigns, from time to time, tactics have been used by the Liberal Party. I don't think you would be unfamiliar with them. In fact the Member sitting near you went to Quebec City and said that Brian Mulroney is leading a party of Orangemen.

● (1150)

An Hon. Member: It's true.

Mr. Mulroney: He says that is true. In point of fact, I am leading the Orangemen, the Knights of Columbus—

[*Translation*]

—the Chamber of Commerce, the Knights of Columbus, the Dames de Sainte-Anne, the Filles d'Isabelle—

[*English*]

—and the Italians.

Mr. Marchi: It is exactly statements like that are why your Party has not got the support from the Italian community, and never will.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I don't know what is happening here today. It is getting quite out of hand. Wednesday becomes Friday, and Friday becomes Tuesday.

A supplementary question.

REQUEST FOR APOLOGY

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I ask my supplementary in all seriousness, and I hope he answers the question. In light of the insulting and derogatory nature of your Finance Minister's question, will you, as Leader of the

Government, and the Finance Minister, issue immediately in the House a formal apology to the Canadian Italian community? Will he do that to show that he has credibility to back up his words?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can tell my hon. friend that I and my Party are delighted and honoured by the support, and growing support, we receive from the Italian Canadian community which has done so much to build a magnificent Canada. The only unfortunate racist statement was made by the Hon. Member—

Mr. Marchi: Answer the question.

Mr. Mulroney: —who tried to introduce an old canard into Canadian politics. It was for that reason that the Liberal Party was so resoundingly rejected across the country. That is why.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Essex-Windsor.

Mr. Beatty: Can all the rest of us go home, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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SOCIAL SECURITYMIDDLE-INCOME SOCIAL PROGRAMS—STATEMENT
ATTRIBUTED TO MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It is a very serious and deeply felt question. 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?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): I am saying that the Finance Minister never said that.

Mr. Deans: He did.

Mr. Mulroney: I am saying—

Mr. Deans: Why don't you answer the question? He did say it.

Mr. Mulroney: I want my hon. friend from Hamilton Mountain—

Mr. Deans: You can't get away with all that.

Mr. Mulroney: —to save his energy for Christmas. It is coming.

Mr. Deans: Are you going to allow Christmas this year, Sir?

Mr. Mulroney: I am saying to my hon. friend who, since coming to the House, has demonstrated a degree of leadership not yet seen in the front benches of his Party, that he would recognize that this statement must be read in its complete context. I am satisfied that a proper reading of that will