

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

SOCIAL SECURITY

REQUEST FOR PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It is clear that the Government is bent on reshaping, even vandalizing a good many of our programs in this country.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Oh, the crocodile tears.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Government has obviously abandoned the opposition of Canadians to star wars technology. It has softened our fight for our environment and against acid rain. The Government has also, Mr. Speaker, through the Minister of Defence, insulted the peace movement in our country.

An Hon. Member: Right on.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): And now, of course, Government is mounting, or appears to be mounting, a frontal attack on the social programs which represent a heritage to Canadians from coast to coast.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

An Hon. Member: Oh, cool it over there.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I ask the Prime Minister whether he would, in the interests of dissipating the uncertainty which has been provoked by the contradiction in his remarks, the remarks of the Minister of National Health and Welfare and of the Minister of Finance, allow and authorize, through his House Leader, a special debate on the subject of our social security programs before this session adjourns for Christmas.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that I can understand the frustration of the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition. He gets upstaged by the guy who wants to be the Leader of the Opposition—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: —who is sitting next to the guy who wants to be the Leader of the Party which wants to be the Opposition—right over there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deans: Where is Joe Clark, by the way?

Mr. Mulroney: I believe my right hon. friend would agree that we have not been—

Mr. Tobin: You started up your lies in Montreal and you've been telling them ever since. Ask Joe Clark. Ask Clark.

Mr. Mulroney: That Hon. Member has never been the same since he almost became Minister of Youth.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: He just hasn't recovered, Mr. Speaker. We have not been vandalizing anything, as my right hon. friend knows.

Mr. Chrétien: Yes or no?

Mr. Mulroney: We have been seeking to improve. We have indicated that it is our intention to maintain the concept of universality, to provide Canadians with all of the benefits to which they are entitled. We are trying as well, and we hope with the co-operation of the Opposition, to find ways, with our scarce resources, to get more money into the hands of those who need it most in Canada. I would think that those Hon. Members would rush to support this kind of progressive view—

Mr. Gauthier: The question, Brian; the question.

Mr. Mulroney: —because it is in the interests of people in Canada who need help from the Government of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1420)

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER ISSUE STATEMENT

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister is not going to instruct his House Leader to give us an immediate debate on this issue in the House of Commons, and if he has not been able to persuade his Minister of Finance to bring down an early Budget in order that Canadians may have an understanding of which pensioners will receive their pensions and which families will receive their family allowances, would he issue a statement in his own name detailing where the cut-off is going to be and whom the tax back is going to affect? Would he do this before Christmas so that the Canadian people can understand where they and their families stand for this season and the coming year? I think this is a very essential question.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition asks if I will instruct the House Leader. He is quoted this morning as saying that he will instruct a bunch of Liberal bagmen in the Senate to try to frustrate the will of the duly elected House of Commons. I can tell him that he will not get away with that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: That is an accurate quote.

Mr. Deans: Abolish the Senate.

Mr. Broadbent: Abolish it.