

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): He has the same message. He just keeps on yapping and he is not even speaking from his own seat.

The point is to create jobs. We need jobs in Canada for the young. We need jobs to create wealth. Surely that has to be the first point of consideration. The other point which I would make, and I made it yesterday in a speech, so he can see it in the debates which were held yesterday, is that he has left out, throughout the entire debate, when he speaks either in the House or to seniors, that the minimum tax which the Minister of Finance said clearly in the Budget would take effect in 1986 is the same period of time when the matter of indexation will take place. I would ask him to take a look at the Budget, at both sides of the issue, and to be fair about it on both sides of the issue.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. During this Question Period we have given the Minister five options. He has risen and defended those who make their money from capital gains. He has defended those who make their money from windfall profits. He has defended those who are not paying their fair share of taxes. Who, on that side, will defend the old age pensioners?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I will, and every one of my colleagues does.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp (Provencher): The reason I have rejected every one of his options is that they are based on the same principle. That principle is: create a larger debt; take more money in tax dollars and pay it out in debt servicing. That was included in every one of his options. Those are options which have not worked. We have got an annual \$35 billion debt. We have an accumulated \$190 billion debt. It has not worked. Despite all that spending, there are 1.4 million unemployed people. Those are the reasons why we had to change the course.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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SOCIAL SECURITY

EXPANSION OF DISABILITY DEFINITION

Mr. Don Ravis (Saskatoon East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It is my understanding that in the recent Budget, by virtue of expanding the definition of disabled, 120,000 Canadians will receive additional social benefits. I would like the Minister to explain how many of the 120,000 are senior citizens.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I find it passing strange, when a question of that nature is asked, that the Liberals do not want to hear the answer.

Mr. Lapierre: We know the answer.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Under the present tax provision the definition for disability, namely, that a person can reduce their taxable income by a certain amount because of a disability factor, was based on what has sometimes been referred to as traditional disability criteria, such as a person who is bedridden, in a wheelchair, or blind. We thought it should be expanded to include, for instance, families who look after members of their family who are mentally retarded. We expect that an additional 120,000 Canadians, and their families who are fulfilling that responsibility, will be eligible. I will have to get back to the Hon. Member on the number of seniors whom it will affect.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

QUESTION PERIOD—ATTENDANCE OF PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. In the Conservative campaign booklet, "PC pocket politics", during the election campaign the Conservative Party said:

Government must be accountable to the people of Canada... accessible government begins with respecting the role of Parliament... We will return Parliament to the forefront of legislative activity—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allmand: If those promises mean anything at all, they mean that the Prime Minister must be here to answer questions which only he can answer with respect to violations of the conflict of interest guidelines and promises which he made with respect to patronage during the election campaign.

Has the Prime Minister introduced a new system, or has he given instructions to his staff whereby he will attend Question Period only two or three days per week? Does his staff set his schedule in accordance therewith? If he has, will he give the House the memo which sets out the instructions for attendance at Question Period?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think it is widely known that I stay away from the House because I am terrified of the Hon. Member.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Copps: You would not answer the senior citizens, would you?