

Oral Questions

the Opposition meeting with the public. That discussion has taken place.

I believe that the airing of the matter has been adequate. Furthermore, I remind the Leader of the New Democratic Party that when we look at benefits to families, he should also be reminded of the increase in the child tax credit, that there was a strong representation from social groups to change the tax expense for children on the basis that it gave greatest benefit to those with greatest income, and that there was a change to the family allowance that he has addressed personally.

I think we must look at that entire package. I believe the debate has been adequate.

Mr. Broadbent: I say to the Minister that I am also aware of the fact that the Government has given a capital gains tax gift to the rich of Canada that will cost the treasury some \$500 million a year, which is more than enough to continue family allowance payments the way they should be.

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER MEET CHURCH
REPRESENTATIVES AND OTHER GROUPS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister because the request for a meeting is with him, now the Minister of National Health and Welfare. That meeting is requested by representatives of the church, women's groups, representatives of the rich and poor and families throughout Canada. That request to meet with the Prime Minister was made some time ago. Will he meet with them sometime today in an act of generosity and Christmas spirit?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think it is probably fair to say that I have been very accessible to groups who wish to meet with me. I have done it on a regular basis at all times. I have never turned down a reasonable request at any time for a meeting that I could accommodate.

Ms. Mitchell: What about women?

Mr. Mulroney: I know that Ministers have—meeting with the women? I am the first Prime Minister to meet with representatives of women's groups in this country on a regular basis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: And with representatives of the poor, with religious groups and peace groups. I am the first Prime Minister of the country to go to speak to the peace groups.

Ms. Mitchell: You don't listen and you do not do anything when they ask.

Mr. Benjamin: Answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I ask Hon. Members to please allow questions to be put and answered.

Mr. Ouellet: That is not an answer.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Mulroney: We were elected to deal with the important social problems. For example, the people here who believe today—I know it is not Christmas-like for them to do so—but the people in the galleries should remember that when we brought in our economic program the Members opposite were predicting a loss of 200,000 jobs, but 416,000 new jobs were created.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: That is social justice for the country.

Mr. Speaker: May I remind all Members on all sides that any reference to the presence of anybody in the gallery is entirely out of order.

● (1130)

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister is right, as he is, that the economy is doing better than not only the Government's forecast and the Opposition's forecast—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Questions and answers should be allowed to be put and answered without applause and comments.

An Hon. Member: It is a big "if".

Mr. Broadbent: I say to the Prime Minister with this improvement he should show some generosity by making sure the people get the money who need it, namely, the recipients of family allowances.

Since the Prime Minister has just suggested that he is willing to meet with a lot of groups, instead of meeting with groups at his convenience when he wants to persuade them to do something, will he meet with a group that wants to meet him to persuade him to change his mind?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is not a supplementary question. It is simply the same question put for the third time, with respect.

Mr. Manly: No.

Mr. Speaker: With respect.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am perfectly prepared to allow supplementary questions but—

Mr. Broadbent: It is a new rule.

Mr. Axworthy: It is a new rule.