

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Skelly: Sit down.

Mr. Nunziata: The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) is displaying unparalleled hypocrisy and contempt for the Canadian public by the manner in which he is appointing his bagmen and Tory friends to patronage positions. If Liberal patronage was so wrong, Mr. Speaker, what makes Conservative patronage so right?

Now that the Prime Minister has an option, now that he has a choice, now that he can say no to the old systems and attitudes, he is saying yes. Herein lies the hypocrisy. Is the devil making him do it, or is he simply living up to his pre-election promise to dance with the Tories "who brung him"? Is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, that Canadians seriously question the credibility and integrity of the Government?

The Prime Minister's unspeakable arrogance is not going unnoticed by the Canadian public. Canadians will remember the Prime Minister campaigning long and hard during the election campaign against the evils of patronage. Canadians will remember the pre-Christmas pork-barrelling. Where are the criteria for quality which he promised that will impress the Canadian people? Where is the reform that he promised us? More important, Mr. Speaker, where is the honesty in this Government? If there is anything worse than an "old whore", Mr. Speaker, it is a hypocritical "old whore".

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Hon. Member that his time has expired.

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THE PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, our great Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) is truly deserving of the immense praise and acclamation we in the House of Commons wish to bestow on him today. Our outstanding and dynamic leader has succeeded in uniting Canada, an accomplishment which, until now, had only been aspired to. The November Gallup Poll has concluded that Canadians are no longer lacking confidence in the future of Confederation.

The Prime Minister has attained an historic benchmark in Canadian politics through his achievement in bringing about unity and harmony. Separatism in the west and in Quebec has been laid to rest, resulting in a strong and united Canada solidly fused by the Prime Minister. The spirit of unity in this Government, which represents all parts of the nation, is a true reflection of the unanimity now held between Canadians.

Congratulations and thanks to the Prime Minister for his paramount triumph, which is regarded as a supreme success by all.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[English]

SOCIAL SECURITY

SENIOR CITIZENS' INCOME TAX EXEMPTION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I can only say, at the beginning of a new year in Parliament, that we did not start this particular performance of applause, but I do want to say to the Prime Minister, in personal terms, that I wish him health and happiness. Apart from that—

An Hon. Member: That is far enough.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): One thing I do want to say is that this Party takes particular satisfaction in the fact that it appears, as a result of a statement made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, that the Government has retreated from its attack on the principle of universality—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):—of our social programs, particularly old age pensions and family allowances. We will await the document to see if we are really satisfied with the position of the Government because, Mr. Speaker, Ministers of this Government, indeed, the Prime Minister, have been changing their positions and reversing themselves as frequently as tides in the Bay of Fundy.

An Hon. Member: Right on.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Minister of National Health and Welfare did say, however, that the Government was still considering eliminating the income tax exemption for our senior citizens. In view of the fact that our senior citizens are among the least affluent in our country, particularly women, would the Prime Minister make a commitment to the effect that the Government will not eliminate the old age income tax exemption when that paper is produced?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I believe the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, when he takes a look at the statement that was made on Friday last, and statements made by the Prime Minister, will see that universality was not in question, that that remains, that there was not going to be a means test, and that there was not going to be—

An Hon. Member: It is a sacred trust.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Yes, a sacred trust, and that is what we maintain.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp (Provencher): That being the case, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am sure when he sees the paper next Monday, a week today, will have our positions confirmed, and not his alleged agenda.