

Oral Questions

to strengthen medicare but also to establish a working relationship with the Provinces, so that the people who deliver these programs, that is, the Provinces, have the ability to bring those programs forward in a way which is also affordable.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I did not hear the last word.

Mr. Epp: Affordable.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the sentiments of the Hon. Member and I hope he is right that all Canadians support medicare. That is the premise on which, I believe, the Minister of National Health and Welfare is proceeding, that Canadians want the preservation of medicare. I must respectfully disagree with the Hon. Member when he suggests that there is no Province, if I understood him well, which wants to alter medicare as it now exists. I said quite clearly, in the interview which has been referred to, that I believe there is an ideological struggle here. I believe some provincial Governments do not believe in medicare as it has existed. I believe that they are introducing the kind of user fees which might, in the mind of the Hon. Member, and in mine, provide a deterrent to the universality of the scheme. However, that is precisely what the Minister of Health and Welfare is trying to determine now.

We certainly do not see a confrontation. We certainly do not want to use any financial penalty. That is what I was telling the interviewer. We would prefer to see medicare preserved in its essence through a process of discussion. In that sense, that is why the Minister is proceeding as she is. I do hope that the Hon. Member is right in so far as his Leader is concerned, that we will hear from Mr. Mulroney very soon, saying that he also wants the preservation of medicare and that he will realize that the Premier of Alberta, for one, for ideological reasons, does not seem to agree with the concept of medicare now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**REQUEST FOR RESTORATION OF ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE UNIFORMS**

Mr. Ron Stewart (Simcoe South): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. The Minister will know the debacle which our Navy is in by reading the recent Senate report. He also is quite aware of the report which we completed on the reserve army and its complete and total lack of necessary equipment. He also is aware of the Fyffe Report, which stated categorically that the morale of the forces was low and that one of the easiest ways to put that morale back in place was to return to three distinctive uniforms. Would the Minister comment on whether or not he is recommending such a switch?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I believe the subject has been raised quite

often by my own Department, of course, and by individuals from the Air Force, Navy, and even the Army. My answer has always been that, despite the fact that this could well be desirable, in one way or another I feel what is more desirable for the armed forces is the re-equipment program which was started a few years back in order to provide members of the Forces with better planes, better ships, better tanks, and better weapons with which to fight with. After that we could possibly discuss uniforms.

SUGGESTION FORCES BE POLLED ON ISSUE OF UNIFORMS

Mr. Ron Stewart (Simcoe South): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. Is the Minister going to recommend to Cabinet an extra \$550 million in defence spending over the next few years as suggested by the Senate? Also, will he not use the Queen's Regulations to interfere, but instead allow a questionnaire to go to members of the Armed Forces concerning whether or not they would like to see a return to three distinctive uniforms?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I do not feel I can stop any Hon. Members from questioning their constituents on whatever they want. However, I am sure it would be a useless exercise to ask members of the Armed Forces if they would prefer the different uniforms because I know very well what the answer will be before the petition is sent.

Mr. Blenkarn: Yes.

Mr. Lamontagne: They would like to have different uniforms. However, at the same time they should be asked if they want us to spend millions of dollars for three different uniforms or spend hundreds of millions of dollars for better equipment and weapons to fight with. I would say, as an ex-military man, give me the tools to do the job, and the uniform can be dealt with after that.

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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**NEGOTIATION OF FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AGREEMENTS**

Hon. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Economic Development. In view of the fact that all development agreements and subsidiary agreements, except one, between Canada and New Brunswick, will expire this year, will the Minister tell the House if negotiations are now under way for their renewal or replacement, and when might we expect some results?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Minister of State for Economic Development and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Yes, Madam Speaker, negotiations have in fact begun with a number of Provinces toward concluding new economic and regional development agreements which will come into effect at the expiration of the general development agreements in 1984. There is a tentative date scheduled for negotiations