

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is quoted directly as saying: "What we're saying is that there are people who don't need it. Upper and middle income social programs cannot be afforded today." Those are not my words; those are his words.

Is that a clear statement of a position taken by your Government that you believe that these programs, which affect over 13 million Canadians, can no longer be afforded? Is that the proposition that you are going to be putting forward in the release of your social papers?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend knows full well that his statement is fundamentally vexatious. My hon. friend has chosen to segregate one part of a sentence from a lengthy interview.

While my hon. friend was a member of the ministry he resorted to the same notion of inviting discussion on serious matters, through white papers or other means. The Minister of Finance is attempting to initiate discussion across the country to get views that might help us in our desire to deliver services more efficiently to those who need them most. I think my hon. friend would agree with that, because I think it is a proper and reasonable course to follow, particularly when we are burdened with such an enormous federal debt.

PROGRAMS REFERRED TO BY MINISTER

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister be willing to tell the House what programs he thinks the Minister of Finance was referring to in the statement? Surely that could be answered without any accusations of things being distorted or taken out of context. If the Minister of Finance was trying to stimulate discussion, perhaps the Prime Minister could tell us what middle income social programs the Minister of Finance had in mind.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, perhaps once my hon. friend has had a chance to read the interview fully, and place it in its proper context, he will see, as I think any objective observer would, that the object of the exercise was precisely to invite reasonable dialogue and to avoid, to the extent humanly possible, supercilious questioning. I see we have not been fully successful.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, it does not seem supercilious to me to ask a specific question if the Prime Minister is interested in dialogue. We cannot talk about things of which we know not.

PROGRAMS QUERY

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Will the Prime Minister tell us what programs the Minister of Finance was referring to so that we can respond to the invitation which the

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Prime Minister has extended, without any detail or substance, time after time today?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Given the clarity of the question, I think I can fairly say, and I hope my hon. friend will agree with this, that when he takes the time to read the full interview, I genuinely believe he will find that it is not a substantial variance from the statement set out by my hon. friend, the Minister of Finance, on November 8. There is a genuine desire to invite mature and reasonable dialogue on a vital question. I look forward to my hon. friend participating in that in a very productive way.

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[Translation]

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ESTABLISHMENT OF GATIQ—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Louis-Hébert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology.

The Minister is probably already aware of the existence of a well structured action group in the riding of Louis-Hébert. The purpose of this group, which calls itself the GATIQ, is to promote the establishment of hi-tech industry in the Ste. Foy-Quebec City area. I intend to work along the same lines as the group, and I support its goals without reservation. I would like to know whether the Minister could inform the House of the measures he has taken and intends to take in this respect.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I shall be delighted to answer the Hon. Member's question.

[English]

I would like to inform the Hon. Member that it has been my pleasure to visit Quebec on two occasions to visit officials at Laval University and the optics laboratory there, and to meet with the group of which the Member speaks—

[Translation]

—GATIQ, the Groupe d'action technologique industrielle de Québec.

[English]

We are favourably inclined toward the proposal to establish a technological industrial park in Quebec along the lines of the proposals that we have been receiving. In a short period of time we will be announcing a decision as to the location of that industrial park and the optics laboratory to be contained therein.